



EQUALITY BULLETIN

WHEN LOSS BECOMES DISPOSSESSION

In Kajiado West, widowhood too often means eviction, exclusion and erased rights – but a new law promises to redraw the boundaries of justice.

In Torosei village, tucked deep within Kajiado West Constituency, widowhood has too often marked the beginning of a second crisis.

When a husband dies, the mourning period is brief. What follows, for many women here, is a quiet struggle over land, livestock and legitimacy. Boundaries shift. Titles disappear. Cattle are claimed. In polygamous households, homes become contested ground. Some widows are pressured to vacate matrimonial land. Others are sidelined in succession decisions or coerced into cultural practices they did not choose.

During a recent field assessment in the area, the National Gender and Equality Commission encountered women whose lives had been reshaped not only by bereavement, but by dispossession. Their testimonies painted a stark picture of grief compounded by economic exclusion and legal invisibility. [Page 7,8](#)



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A Message from the Chief Executive Officer

In this edition, we reflect on the urgent need to turn Kenya’s constitutional promises into lived realities. In Torosei, Kajiado West, widows face dispossession, denied property, pensions, and essential services. NGEC is leading the Widowed Persons Protection Bill, 2026, to safeguard rights, prevent harmful practices, and ensure social, legal, and economic support.

The protection of children remains equally pressing. The sentencing of seven-year-old TBK’s perpetrator in Nyeri underscores the need for stronger child protection systems. NGEC’s Victim Impact Assessment placed the human cost at the centre of justice, sending a clear message: crimes against children will not be tolerated.

At the national level, the Commission continues to engage leadership, including Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi, to embed gender and disability inclusion into policy and development priorities ahead of the 2027 elections.

Through these efforts, the Commission remains committed to turning rights into reality for all.



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 Chief Executive Officer
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Silence stolen: a child, a family, a nation reckons with loss

Mother's anguished voice echoes in Nyeri High Court as the justice system confronts the brutal killing of seven-year-old TBK – and Kenya's struggle to protect its most vulnerable.

NYERI — In a hushed courtroom this week, the weeping voice of a mother cut through the solemn echo of judicial proceedings, laying bare a pain that no parent should ever know. “No apology can bring back my child,” she told Justice Magare Dennis Kizito at the High Court in Nyeri as the matter of Republic vs Nicholas Julius Macharia took centre stage, marking another painful chapter in Kenya’s ongoing struggle against violence targeting children.

The case, involving the 2025 defilement and murder of seven-year-old TBK, has gripped the nation with its cruelty and its implications for how the justice system responds to crimes against children. What began as the disappearance of a joyful Grade One pupil has become a defining moment in Kenya’s pursuit of accountability, protection, and the rule of law.

On May 24, 2025, TBK was last seen alive, walking near a market in Nyeri town where her mother and grandmother worked. CCTV footage later revealed her in the company of local porter Nicholas Julius Macharia, moments before she vanished — a haunting image that would later become key evidence in the case.

Her lifeless body was found buried beneath a bed in a house in the Kiawara slums two days later, triggering outrage and grief that rippled through families, community leaders, and child protection advocates alike. A post-mortem confirmed she had been defiled before she was suffocated to death — a fate that has shaken public confidence and exposed deep vulnerabilities in child safety and community protection.

At her funeral, mourners called for a full investigation and justice while echoing concerns over gaps in community policing structures, particularly in informal settlements where residents felt unsafe and under-protected.

These proceedings focused on the presentation of a Victim Impact Assessment undertaken by the National Gender and Equality Commission. Delivered to TBK’s mother inside the courtroom, the assessment captures the deep emotional, social, and economic toll that the loss has had on her family — a document designed to ensure that the human cost of the crime is placed firmly at the centre of the judicial process.



Zaphida Chege of NGECC delivers a Victim Impact Assessment to TBK’s mother

Justice Magare oversaw the session, during which the mother rejected a recent apology tendered by Macharia, stating that no words could compensate for the loss of her daughter’s life, aspirations, and future.

The court has scheduled further rulings, with sentencing expected following final submissions later this month — a decision anticipated to reverberate beyond Nyeri’s High Court.

Legal analysts note that cases of child murder and sexual violence pose complex challenges for Kenya’s justice system. While mandatory life sentences exist for child defilement and murder under the Sexual Offences Act and the Penal Code, securing convictions and appropriate sentencing requires meticulous evidence gathering, victim testimony, and procedural precision.

Recent efforts by the Nyeri Law Courts to expedite hearing and conclusion of children’s cases reflect a growing recognition of the need for swift and effective legal responses. In November 2025, the courts launched a month-long campaign to fast-track children’s cases, emphasizing collaboration and urgency in safeguarding minors’ rights within the justice system

The National Gender and Equality Commission’s involvement in this case underscores its broader mandate to champion prevention, protection, and ~

accountability mechanisms for children across Kenya, particularly amid rising public concern over violence and abuse.

For families like TBK’s, justice is not merely about punishment. It is about affirming a child’s right to grow, learn, and thrive in safety and dignity — a promise enshrined in Kenya’s Constitution and international child rights frameworks.

The heartache laid bare in Nyeri High Court is a stark reminder that violence against children robs communities of hope and potential. As the legal process unfolds, the Commission has pledged to continue monitoring the case and engaging relevant institutions to strengthen prevention strategies and child protection systems nationwide.



Exhibit submitted as evidence at Nyeri High Court

In the words of those who knew her, Tamara was more than a statistic. She was a daughter, a playmate, and a dream of possibilities now cut short. In seeking justice for her, Kenya confronts not only an individual crime but the urgent task of safeguarding the futures of all its children.

Borders can't stop the fight for dignity

Horn of Africa partners converge in Isiolo to strengthen cross-border action against gender-based violence



Anthony Alyaro of NGEK Isiolo with Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia representatives collaborating on the Horn of Africa GBV initiative

In the arid plains of Isiolo, where pastoral routes cut across borders and cultures mingle under the same unforgiving sun, a quiet but urgent conversation unfolded—one that stretched far beyond county lines and national flags. Delegates from Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia gathered in the frontier town not for diplomacy or trade, but to confront a common crisis that has scarred homes, silenced survivors and stolen futures across the Horn of Africa: gender-based violence.

The meeting, hosted by the Commission's Isiolo Regional Office in partnership with Plan International Kenya, brought together implementers of the Horn of Africa Project on the Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence.

It was more than a routine technical review. It was a rare cross-border moment of reflection, learning and resolve in a region where violence against women and girls remains both widespread and under-reported.

Across East and Southern Africa, the statistics paint a grim picture. Globally, one in three women experiences physical or sexual violence in her lifetime, a violation that cuts across age, culture and geography.

In sub-Saharan Africa, nearly 45 per cent of women report having experienced at least one form of gender-based violence, with young women in rural areas facing some of the highest risks.

During the Isiolo engagement, delegations reviewed project progress, exchanged cross-border lessons and examined the realities faced by survivors in pastoral and border communities. Discussions focused on strengthening referral systems, harmonising survivor-centred approaches and tackling the root causes of violence, including entrenched social norms, poverty and conflict.

Participants noted that mobility across borders often complicates access to justice and services. Survivors may flee from one country to another, only to encounter fragmented legal systems, language barriers and limited support networks. This reality, they agreed, demands coordinated regional solutions rather than isolated national responses.

The Commission's technical support was recognised as a key pillar in building structured, accountable and survivor-centred protection systems. Through its regional presence, the Commission has worked to strengthen coordination among duty bearers, support policy alignment and ensure that gender equality remains central to development and governance efforts. The Isiolo meeting emphasised that no single institution—or country—can tackle gender-based violence alone. Cross-border learning, shared protocols and coordinated interventions were identified as essential to building effective protection systems.

Delegates highlighted the importance of investing in prevention, strengthening legal frameworks, and ensuring that survivors can access services regardless of where they cross a border. They also stressed the need to address emerging threats, including digital violence and trafficking along migration routes.

For the Horn of Africa, the path to peace and development may well begin with a simple, urgent truth: a region cannot prosper while its women and girls live in fear.

Nakuru rallies to protect the most vulnerable

County and national officials pledge coordinated action against gender violence, discrimination, and barriers to justice

The Commission's Nakuru Regional Office held a strategic engagement with the Deputy County Commissioner for Nakuru West Sub-County, Mr Rashid Kwanya, to explore ways of improving collaboration in addressing the challenges facing Special Interest Groups.

The discussions highlighted the persistent barriers that prevent survivors of gender-based violence and discrimination from accessing justice and support. Officials noted that fragmented referral systems, limited resources, and stigma continue to

hinder effective prevention and response, leaving many survivors without the protection and assistance they urgently need.



NGEK Nakuru team with Deputy County Commissioner Mr. Rashid Kwanya during an official courtesy call

To address these gaps, both parties committed to strengthening the Gender-Based Violence clusters in

Nakuru East and West. These clusters, which bring together frontline actors from law enforcement, health services, and community organizations, are designed to streamline case management, enhance coordination, and ensure timely and comprehensive support for survivors.

The engagement reflects the Commission's broader mandate to promote equality and safeguard the rights and dignity of all Kenyans. Officials emphasised that sustained coordination between county and national actors, coupled with community participation, is essential to ensure that policies translate into practical, survivor-centred action.

County rallies against the ‘triple threat’

Stakeholders in Nakuru chart a united front to tackle teenage pregnancies, new HIV infections and gender-based violence ahead of International Women’s Day 2026



NGEC Nakuru Regional Office with participants during a high-level meeting

In Nakuru County, the conversation around gender equality is no longer confined to boardrooms or policy documents. It is unfolding in classrooms where teenage mothers struggle to return to school, in health facilities where young girls seek treatment after abuse, and in homes where silence often hides deep trauma.

These realities framed a high-level meeting convened by the National Gender and Equality Commission through its Nakuru Regional Office, which brought together the Nakuru County Gender Technical Working Group with support from the National Syndemic Diseases Control Council. The forum sought to align the county’s annual gender workplan and lay the groundwork for the commemoration of International Women’s Day 2026.

The discussions centred on a growing concern across the county: the interconnected surge in new HIV infections, teenage pregnancies, and sexual and gender-based violence—what stakeholders described as a “triple threat” facing women, girls, and young people.

Across Nakuru, schools, health facilities, and community structures continue to report troubling trends. Adolescents remain among the most vulnerable groups, with rising cases of teenage pregnancy and new HIV infections, often linked to sexual violence, poverty, and limited access to youth-friendly services. For many families, these are not distant policy issues but everyday struggles affecting their daughters, sons, and communities.

The meeting reaffirmed the Gender Technical Working Group as a strategic platform for coordination, partnership, and accountability.

Participants noted that gender challenges rarely exist in isolation. A girl who experiences sexual violence is more likely to drop out of school, become pregnant, and face heightened vulnerability to HIV infection. Without coordinated interventions, the cycle continues across households and generations.

To address these interconnected risks, members committed to strengthening the eleven gender-based violence clusters operating across the county’s sub-counties. These clusters serve as the first point of response for survivors, linking them to medical care, psychosocial support, legal assistance, and protection services.

However, many of these local structures operate under severe resource constraints, limited training, and inconsistent coordination. Stakeholders therefore agreed on the need for targeted capacity building, improved referral systems, and resource mobilisation to strengthen frontline services.

Education officials at the meeting underscored the critical role schools play in prevention and early intervention. In many institutions, teachers have become the first to notice signs of abuse, absenteeism linked to pregnancy, or behavioural changes associated with trauma.

The National Gender and Equality Commission reiterated its resolve to champion collaborative interventions that translate policies into real-life impact. Officials noted that confronting the triple threat will require sustained political will, adequate funding, and active community participation. As Nakuru prepares for International Women’s Day, the message from the Technical Working Group is clear: the fight against gender inequality must move from discussion to decisive action.

Guardians of the vulnerable: Garissa unites against gbv and child abuse

Frontline actors trained to strengthen survivor-centered responses and safeguard women and children

GARISSA – In a decisive step to protect the county’s most vulnerable, Garissa County, in partnership with key stakeholders including the National Gender and Equality Commission, UNDP Kenya, EACH Rights, MUHURI Kenya, and the Refugee Consortium of Kenya, convened a three-day Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Child Protection training.

The programme focused on prevention, case management, reporting and referral pathways, and understanding the legal and policy frameworks governing GBV and child protection. Frontline actors were equipped with practical tools to enhance coordination, ensure survivor-centered responses, and safeguard the rights of women and children in Garissa County.



Abdiwahab Mohamed representing NGECK Garissa during Gender-Based Violence and Child Protection training

County officials emphasised that such capacity-building initiatives are vital for fostering effective collaboration among agencies, improving timely responses to incidents, and reinforcing a culture of accountability.

By empowering local actors, the training aims to ensure that victims receive support, protection, and justice without delay, strengthening Garissa’s commitment to human rights and child protection.

When words turn weapons: Kisumu leads the fight against hate and inequality

County-level rollout aims to safeguard rights, promote gender equality, and curb the spread of harmful online narratives

In Kisumu County, a new frontier in the battle for social cohesion is emerging—not on the streets, but online. Social media, once hailed as a democratic equaliser, has increasingly become a terrain for abuse, misinformation, and targeted attacks on women, youth, and minority communities. For policymakers, the challenge is clear: in a digital age, safeguarding human dignity demands vigilance, capacity, and actionable frameworks.

This reality set the stage for a significant initiative led by the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) in partnership with the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC). Together, they rolled out a suite of policy instruments at the county level, including the Social Media Monitoring Guidelines, the Gender Analysis Report, and the Kenya National Action Plan against Hate Speech (KNAP).

The effort seeks to transform policy into practice, equipping local institutions with the tools to protect citizens, promote inclusion, and foster responsible digital engagement.

The Cost of Unchecked Online Abuse

Across Kenya, online hate speech and gendered harassment are no longer abstract threats. Women in public life report persistent harassment, young activists face coordinated attacks designed to silence them, and minority communities confront targeted vilification. Such abuse does more than wound—it erodes trust, undermines democratic participation, and weakens the social fabric.

Studies show that in Kenya, digital platforms amplify societal inequalities, making vulnerable groups disproportionately susceptible to harm. When insults, threats, and false narratives become normalized online, their effects often spill into real-world violence, discrimination, and exclusion. Experts warn that unless addressed, online abuse can entrench social divisions and limit access to opportunities, particularly for women and Special Interest Groups.



NGEC Kisumu Regional Office's Davis Okeyo during the meeting

The Kisumu rollout was not merely symbolic. It sought to translate abstract frameworks into actionable, county-level strategies.

The Social Media Monitoring Guidelines provide officials with practical methods to identify and respond to harmful content in real time. The Gender Analysis Report offers critical insight into how policies and programs affect different groups, ensuring interventions are inclusive and equitable. Finally, the Kenya National Action Plan against Hate Speech outlines preventive, legal, and educational measures designed to curb the spread of hate-driven narratives.

The initiative also emphasised capacity building. County officials, civil society actors, and community representatives engaged in hands-on sessions focused on recognising online hate speech, applying gender-sensitive approaches, and fostering inclusive digital discourse. By strengthening local monitoring and response mechanisms, the Commission seeks to ensure that harmful narratives do not go unchecked and that victims receive timely, rights-based protection.

At its core, the initiative is a commitment to human rights. It recognises that hate speech rarely exists in isolation, often intersecting with systemic inequalities. Women leaders, youth activists, and minority groups face compounded risks, where gender, age, ethnicity, and social status amplify vulnerability.

By embedding gender-sensitive monitoring and response mechanisms into county systems, the Commission is empowering local institutions to act decisively. Schools, health facilities, and community structures become not just points of service delivery but also platforms for advocacy, prevention, and protection.

Officials emphasised that tackling online abuse and hate speech is inseparable from broader efforts to promote equality and social cohesion. Policies must not remain confined to paper; they must manifest in the lived realities of communities, ensuring that no Kenyan is excluded from civic, social, or economic life.

The Kisumu initiative underscores a simple truth: in today's interconnected world, words matter. They can wound, divide, and marginalise—but with the right frameworks, training, and vigilance, they can also be harnessed to educate, unite, and empower.

As Kenya navigates the challenges of digital transformation, the collaboration between NGEC and NCIC offers a blueprint for inclusive governance.

By integrating gender-sensitive frameworks with proactive online monitoring, the country is taking a critical step toward safer, more equitable public spaces—both online and offline.

When commemoration meets commitment

Counties mobilise strategy and solidarity to confront violence, inequality and digital abuse ahead of International Women's Day 2026

At a time when national discourse on gender equality is increasingly urgent, stakeholders in Kisumu and Kitui counties have taken concrete steps to move beyond rhetoric toward coordinated, actionable responses to gender-based violence (GBV) and systemic inequality. In forums convened this month, state and non-state actors met to strengthen prevention systems, refine referral pathways and amplify survivor-centred care — signalling a renewed commitment to safeguarding the rights, dignity and wellbeing of women, children and vulnerable populations.



Irene Musau of NGEK Kitui addresses participants at a COVAW-hosted forum

The gatherings — one in Kisumu facilitated by the Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW) and another in Kitui hosted by the same organisation — brought together leaders from government, civil society, community structures and specialised agencies to align action with both local realities and national policy frameworks, especially as International Women's Day 2026 approaches.

In Kisumu County, the meeting at Pinecone Hotel drew members of the Kisumu County Gender Sector Working Group alongside representatives from the Kisumu Regional Office of the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) and a wide spectrum of partners from the Lake Region Economic Bloc. Over three days of deliberations, the forum focused on resource mobilisation, strategic prioritisation and the integration of emerging issues that have gained prominence in public concern.

Central to discussions were the persistent challenges of GBV and harmful practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), the disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic care work borne by women, and the growing phenomenon of digital violence — online abuse that undermines dignity and silences voices. Participants examined how these intersecting issues shape the experiences of women, men and communities at large, and identified areas requiring immediate attention and coordinated responses.

Speakers underscored that addressing such

deep-rooted inequalities demands a broad, multi-sectoral approach that bridges policy and practice, engages grassroots actors, and prioritises systems that are both survivor-centred and community-owned. A shared message emerged: International Women's Day should not only commemorate progress, but also catalyse sustained action that protects rights and promotes equity across all sectors.

Elevating Survivor-Centred Response in Kitui

Parallel efforts were underway in Kitui County, where the NGEK's regional office joined stakeholders at a forum hosted by COVAW at Kithumulani Resort, Kitui Rural Sub-County. Here, the focus shifted toward strengthening practical mechanisms for protection and accountability on the ground.

Participants identified gaps in existing referral pathways and emphasised the indispensable role of community watchdogs in early detection, documentation and support for survivors of GBV. Health professionals, law enforcement personnel, social welfare officers and volunteer monitors collaborated to refine linkages across sectors, ensuring that survivors receive timely, dignified and coordinated support.

The discussions also reaffirmed the importance of aligning duty bearers with specialised services to reduce delays in reporting and intervention. By empowering community actors with clear roles and responsibilities, the forum sought to enhance local resilience and foster environments where survivors feel protected, supported and heard.

Both forums reflected a broader national imperative: aligning legal frameworks with responsive and inclusive systems at the county level.

Kenya's Constitution and national laws unequivocally guarantee the rights of women and children to live free from violence and discrimination. Yet persistent gaps in implementation, resource allocation and community awareness continue to undermine these protections.

Experts at the gatherings highlighted that strengthening GBV prevention and response is not solely the responsibility of specialised agencies; it requires the active engagement of all sectors — from education and health to justice and social services. Participants called for increased budgetary commitments, capacity building for frontline responders, and robust monitoring to ensure that policy commitments translate into measurable outcomes.

As both counties prepare for International Women's Day 2026, the outcomes of these forums are expected to inform county action plans, reinforce implementation frameworks and galvanise resource partnerships.

Stakeholders expressed a shared commitment to ensuring that planning culminates in tangible progress — particularly in enhancing survivor services, streamlining referral mechanisms, and mobilising sustained community engagement.

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When Loss Becomes Dispossession: The Reality of Widows in Kajiado West and the Promise of Reform

In Torosei village, in Kajiado West Constituency, widowhood has too often marked the beginning of a second crisis.

During a recent field assessment, the National Gender and Equality Commission encountered women whose lives had been reshaped not only by bereavement, but by dispossession. Many came from polygamous households. After the death of a husband, land boundaries shifted without consent. Livestock was claimed. Homes were contested. In some cases, widows and their children were pushed to the margins of family property or forced to leave altogether.

For a Commission mandated to promote equality and freedom from discrimination, this was not an isolated social issue. It was a constitutional question.

Poverty Deepened by Exclusion

In Torosei, poverty is not abstract. It is visible in the drought-stricken fields where livestock losses have erased years of household investment. It is evident in the long stretches of impassable road separating widows from government offices where succession processes are initiated. It is present in the stories of women who lack title documents, who have never accessed pensions, and whose children remain unregistered or without support.

The Commission documented cases affecting widows, orphaned children, and persons with disabilities. Some families had not completed death registration. Others had not initiated succession proceedings due to cost, distance, or intimidation. Without formal recognition, they



NGEC's Zaphida Chege during a field assessment in Kajiado County

could not access social protection, bursaries, or health services. Loss of a spouse had translated into loss of legal visibility.

Discrimination and exploitation were recurring themes. Cultural expectations in polygamous settings often placed widows in subordinate positions, particularly where property was informally managed. The absence of enforceable safeguards left many vulnerable to coercion, eviction, and stigma.

These realities sit at the core of the Commission's mandate. The Constitution affirms dignity, equality, non-discrimination, and equal rights within marriage. Where widowhood triggers exclusion, the constitutional promise is interrupted.

From Lived Experience to Legislative Protection

It is against this backdrop that the Commission is intensifying rights sensitisation in affected communities and spearheading the drafting of the Widowed Persons Protection Bill, 2026, a comprehensive rights-based framework designed to close these gaps.

The Bill recognizes widowhood as a distinct legal status deserving structured protection. It applies to all widowed persons regardless of gender, age, culture, religion, marital regime, or social status. It binds national and county governments, institutions, communities, and individuals.

In Torosei, widows spoke of being told they~

could not remain in their matrimonial homes. Under the proposed law, the right to continue occupying the matrimonial home without interference or unlawful eviction would be expressly protected. Any eviction or deprivation of property carried out contrary to the Act would be null and void and subject to criminal sanction.

Several women described pressure to accept cultural practices they did not consent to, including forms of widow inheritance. The Bill explicitly prohibits harmful practices such as forced remarriage, widow cleansing, degrading rites, and stigmatization. It criminalizes property grabbing and interference with a deceased person's estate, reinforcing existing protections under succession law.

In households where children's custody became a point of conflict, the proposed framework affirms the right of a widowed parent to retain custody unless a court determines otherwise in the best interests of the child. This provision speaks directly to the insecurity expressed by mothers in Kajiado West who feared losing both home and children.

The Bill also guarantees widowed persons the right to equality and freedom from discrimination, the right to dignity and protection from cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, and the right to remarry without forfeiting inheritance rights. These are not symbolic declarations. They are enforceable rights anchored in constitutional principles.

Access to Justice and Services

A recurring barrier in Torosei was distance. Poor infrastructure and limited information prevented widows from navigating succession processes, pension claims, and social assistance systems.

» CONTINUATION

The proposed law assigns clear obligations to both levels of government. The national government would be responsible for policy development, enforcement, public education, legal aid, and assistance with succession and pension processes. County governments would be required to establish complementary structures, maintain registries of widowed and orphaned persons, fund legal aid services, and create emergency shelters for displaced widowed persons.

Chiefs and local administrators would have statutory duties to maintain disaggregated records, prevent unlawful evictions, document harmful practices, and report violations. Neglect of duty would attract disciplinary consequences. In areas such as Kajiado West, where local administrative presence is often the first point of state contact, this provision is significant.

The Bill also guarantees access to health services, including bereavement counselling and psychosocial support. In Torosei, the emotional toll of widowhood was as visible as the economic loss. Recognition of mental health and social support as rights aligns with the Commission's broader commitment to holistic equality.

Data, Dignity, and Structural Accountability

One of the most striking findings during the field visit was the absence of reliable data. Without registration or formal recognition, many widows remain statistically invisible.

The proposed legislation requires the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics to recognize widowed persons as a distinct demographic category in national censuses. It mandates periodic research and coordinated data management. Accurate data is not administrative detail. It is the foundation for targeted policy, budgeting, and accountability.

To oversee implementation, the Bill establishes a Widowed Persons Protection Board with a mandate to advise government on law reform, monitor violations, manage national data, promote

awareness, and facilitate access to justice and support services. Its composition would reflect gender balance, regional diversity, inclusion of persons with disabilities, and direct representation of widowed persons. This structure reflects the Commission's emphasis on participation and inclusion.

A dedicated funding framework would support economic empowerment initiatives, emergency relief, bursaries for orphaned children, health insurance, shelters, and counselling services. Strict financial accountability measures would ensure oversight consistent with public finance law.

Equality as Lived Protection

The situation in Torosei is not unique to one village or one constituency. It reflects structural gaps that expose widowed persons to heightened risk of poverty, violence, and exclusion.



NGEC officials and women community members during a field assessment in Kajiado

For the National Gender and Equality Commission, the response is twofold. First, intensify rights sensitisation and public education so that widows, families, and local leaders understand existing legal protections. Second, support the enactment of a comprehensive legislative framework that transforms constitutional guarantees into enforceable, practical safeguards.

Widowhood should not trigger eviction, dispossession, or social isolation. It should not sever a woman from her home, her children, or her livelihood. The Constitution speaks of dignity and equality as inherent and inalienable. The lived experiences in Kajiado West reveal how fragile those principles can become without structured protection.

The proposed Widowed Persons Protection Bill offers a path toward restoring structural trust between vulnerable families and the institutions meant to serve them. In doing so, it aligns squarely with the Commission's mandate to promote equality, protect human rights, and ensure that no Kenyan is rendered invisible at the moment they are most in need of protection.

Equality at the Helm: NGEN Pushes Two-Thirds Rule Ahead of 2027

Commission urges institutional reform, Cabinet-level mainstreaming and stronger accountability in high-level talks with Prime Cabinet Secretary



Vice Chairperson Thomas Koyier, Commissioner Dr. Margaret Karungaru and CEO Dr. Purity Ngina – during a meeting with Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi

At the Kenya Railways Headquarters, the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), led by Vice Chairperson Mr Thomas Koyier, held high-level talks with Musalia Mudavadi, Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, in a move aimed at accelerating Kenya's equality agenda ahead of the 2027 General Election.

The Commission reaffirmed the need for sustained collaboration across Government to embed gender equality and inclusion within national development priorities and Cabinet decision-making processes. NGEN called for equality considerations to be institutionalised – not treated as optional add-ons – within policy formulation and approval frameworks.

Central to the discussions was stricter monitoring of gender and disability mainstreaming under the performance contracting system. The Commission emphasised measurable accountability indicators to ensure ministries and state agencies are assessed on inclusion outcomes. With 2027 on the horizon, NGEN renewed focus on enforcing the constitutional "Not More Than Two-Thirds" principle and ensuring compliance within the 14th Parliament – a long-standing constitutional obligation yet to be fully realised.

The Commission also highlighted operationalisation of the National Policy on Ethnic Minorities, Indigenous and Marginalised Communities, 2025, implementation of the 2026 Presidential Taskforce Report on Gender-Based Violence, and sustainable financing for Gender Equality and Inclusion.

As the country moves toward the next electoral cycle, the message from Railways House was firm: constitutional promises must translate into measurable inclusion.

Policy under review as Kisumu confronts the realities of gender-based violence

Stakeholders push for stronger coordination and survivor-centred services as gaps in implementation come into focus

Kisumu's efforts to confront sexual and gender-based violence entered a moment of sober reflection this week, as government agencies, civil society organisations, and development partners gathered to review the county's Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Policy of 2019. The engagement, led with technical guidance from the Commission, offered a candid assessment of what has worked, what has stalled, and what must urgently change if survivors are to receive the protection and justice they deserve.

Adopted in 2019, the policy was widely seen as a progressive step towards strengthening prevention, response, and coordination across sectors. It promised a framework that would bring together health facilities, law enforcement, social services, and community actors to ensure survivors received timely, dignified, and comprehensive support. Yet, years into its implementation, stakeholders acknowledged that the promise of the policy has not fully translated into consistent protection on the ground.

The review sessions provided a structured platform to examine the policy's substance and practical application. Participants reflected on the experiences of frontline actors and the realities facing survivors across the county. What emerged was a picture of a system still grappling with coordination challenges, resource constraints, and service gaps that undermine the effectiveness of otherwise well-intentioned provisions.

In some areas, survivors still face long journeys to access medical care or legal support.



Davis Okeyo of NGEK Kisumu engages stakeholders during the review of the 2019 SGBV Policy

In others, referral systems remain fragmented, forcing victims to move from one institution to another without clear guidance. Data systems, meant to track cases and inform policy decisions, were also identified as inconsistent, making it difficult to measure progress or identify trends.

These shortcomings, stakeholders noted, are not merely administrative obstacles. They represent real consequences for individuals and families navigating the aftermath of violence. For a survivor seeking justice, delays, stigma, and institutional confusion can mean the difference between pursuing a case and abandoning it altogether.

The discussions were marked by a shared recognition that effective policy implementation requires more than written frameworks. It demands sustained political will, adequate resources, trained personnel, and strong coordination among service providers. Participants emphasised the need to strengthen referral pathways, invest in survivor-friendly facilities, and enhance data systems to support evidence-based decision-making.

There was also consensus on the importance of community engagement. Cultural stigma, fear of reprisal, and lack of awareness continue to discourage reporting in many areas. Addressing these barriers, stakeholders said, is essential to building a system that survivors trust.

Despite the challenges highlighted, the review was not framed as a failure, but as a necessary step towards improvement. By openly confronting implementation gaps, the county and its partners signalled a renewed commitment to building a more responsive and survivor-centred framework.

The exercise marks an important milestone in the broader effort to eliminate sexual and gender-based violence and uphold the rights and dignity of all persons, particularly vulnerable groups.

As Kisumu moves forward, the success of the policy will ultimately be measured not by the strength of its language but by the safety, support, and justice experienced by those it is meant to protect.

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Garissa Regional Office
KRA Route off Lamu Road, Province,
Garissa Town.

Kilifi Regional Office
Malindi Complex, off Lamu-Malindi Road,
Malindi Town.

Kitui Regional Office
Nzambani Park, off Kitui Referral Hospital Road,
Kitui Town.

Isiolo Regional Office
County Estate, Along Kiwanjani Road
Isiolo Town