

**PRESS STATEMENT BY PROF. MARGARET KOBIA, CABINET SECRETARY, PUBLIC SERVICE, YOUTH AND GENDER AFFAIRS, ON THE ASSAULT OF WINFRED MWENDE, A 35-YEAR-OLD WOMAN IN MAKUENI COUNTY.**

I am deeply saddened by reports that we have received about the assault of Winfred Mwendu, a 35-year-old woman from Makueni County. This is a very unfortunate event and therefore I have instructed my officers to carry a thorough investigation in collaboration with police and other stakeholders on the ground and report to me appropriately.

The 35-year-old lady, who is a mother of three children, herds the family cattle. According to the victim, the husband, David Nzomo, accused her of unfaithfulness after she received phone calls four times. The perpetrator accused the survivor for having an affair with other herdsmen. She was rescued by the mother and uncle of the perpetrator and taken to Makueni Level 4 Referral Hospital. The matter was also reported to Makueni Divisional Police Headquarters vide OB: 45/30/7/2018. As a ministry responsible for gender affairs, I condemn this unfortunate incident in the strongest terms possible.

I am aware that this incident has happened in a community that is deeply cultural rooted in such matters of wife battering. Thus they are frown to reporting such incidents to the authorities and instead treating them as family matters. I wish to urge them to help in arresting the perpetrator so that they can deter the practice in the communities and to ensure the survivors receive treatment and counselling to help them recover the effects of GBV. However, I congratulate the mother and uncle of the perpetrator for rescuing Mwendu and taking her to hospital.

I am pleased to note that police, the office of county women representative, my officers in the county offices and other key partners in Makueni County are investigating and tracing the

whereabouts of the perpetrator who is still at large. We anticipate that he will soon be arrested.

The Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs is working in collaboration with Healthcare Assistance Kenya (HAK) to operate a 24-hour toll free telephone line that helps survivors of Gender Based Violence to get referrals for treatment, ambulance services, Police and justice. I urge survivors of GBV in all communities in the country to report cases of GBV to the 1195 and they will get assistance.

I wish to pledge Government support for the survivor (Winfred Mwende) for justice to be done.

We shall also ensure that she continues to undergo counselling even after she has been discharged from the Makueni Referral Hospital where she is undergoing treatment to help her to recover fully.

I also want to assure the survivor and her other family members, that we shall do everything possible within our means to ensure that the perpetrator (David Nzomo) is prosecuted within the law and that survivor be assisted to become economically empowered through being linked to our socio-economic empowerment programme.

The Ministry has also signed a four-year joint programme on prevention and response to Gender-Based Violence. The components of this programme involve the Prevention of GBV in the Communities, the protection of the survivors of GBV, the speedy prosecution of GBV cases by the Criminal Justice System, the programming of initiatives to support the prevention, protection and prosecution of GBV case and creating synergies through partnerships so that the fight against gender-based violence can be won.