

PRESS STATEMENT BY THE CABINET SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC SERVICE YOUTH AND GENDRE AFFAIRS MS. SICILY KARIUKI ON ALLEGATIONS OF RAPE AT THE KENYATTA NATIONAL HOPSITAL

It is with great concern that I learnt of the allegations that have been levelled against the Country's largest referral hospital; the Kenyatta National Hospital concerning the raping of new mothers at the institution as they moved from their wards to breastfeed their new-born babies.

Whereas the Institution has come out to defend itself against these allegations, we in the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs wish to condemn the incident in the strongest terms possible as well as other Gender Based Violence related incidents that may be reported in other health facilities in the country.

I take this opportunity to urge the management of The Kenyatta National Hospital to take this matter seriously and initiate an in-depth investigation into these allegations and take remedial measures to ensure that the security of all patients at the Institution is guaranteed.

I also encourage the hospital to ensure that they move new mothers closer to the new-born Unit. Thus they should ensure that the maternity wing and the new-born unit are housed on the same floor to ensure that new mothers do not have to move to another floor to breastfeed their children, thereby exposing them to the risks of facing possible rape attacks.

I call for the beefing up of security at the Institution so as to ensure that the new mothers are well guarded while moving to the new-born unit to avoid a repeat of incidences such as these reported in the future. I would recommend female security officers be assigned to the new mothers.

I urge the Institutions to install high powered CCTV cameras as well as improved lighting especially on the corridors that are frequently used by patients so that any such incidences occurring at the institution will be detected immediately and remedial action taken immediately as appropriate.

I call upon the Directorate of Criminal Investigation and the Ministry of Health to conduct their investigations into these allegations speedily so that the truth may be unearthed and those culpable be persecuted.

The crime of rape is a form of gender based violence that is rampant in the country and it is unfortunate that most of the cases go unreported due to fear of intimidation and the reproach that is associated with it. However I wish to urge those who may become victims of this vice to report to the nearest police station, chief or hospital so that they can be helped to get effective health care and justice. This is because the Ministry is working with these institutions to ensure GBV survivors are well protected.

It is very unfortunate that the country continues to experience an increase in Gender Based Violence incidences and this can be attributed to absence of strong prevention interventions,

weak protection mechanisms for survivors, evasive prosecution of GBV cases, and an uncoordinated response to GBV from State and non-state actors.

Despite this, the Government through my Ministry remains steadfast in its commitment to the eradication of all forms of Gender Based Violence including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and other harmful practices. It is in this regard, that it has undertaken various measures to address this problem which includes formulation and enactment of various policies and legislation such as the National Policy for prevention & response to GBV 2014 which was launched by His Excellency the President; the Sexual Offences Act 2006; the Employment Act 2007; The Children's Act 2001; The Marriage Act 2014; The matrimonial property Act 2013; The Counter Trafficking in Persons Act of 2010; The Prohibition of FGM Act, 2011; The Domestic Violence Bill 2015; Currently there is we are working on a Bill on the Two third Gender rule 2015 so as to ensure that women are equitably represented in leadership positions in the country, the National Equality Policy 2015 to ensure that equality provisions in the constitution are implemented and a Bill to promote representation of Marginalized Groups 2015.

The government has prioritized the setting up of Gender Based Violence (GBV) One Stop Recovery Centers across the country. A GBV recovery center has been launched at the Kilifi Level Hospital and the Ministry has refurbished similar centers, in Nyeri, Migori, Kisii, Trans Nzoia and Uasin Gishu Counties. Currently is in the process of identifying model centers for replication across the country.

The government has also signed a joint programme with the UN on Gender Based Violence after the realization that despite the sustained efforts by the Government and Non State Actors to address GBV, it still remains pervasive. The objective of the programme is to provide a multi- pronged response to GBV, increasing the coordination and effectiveness of GBV initiatives. The Joint Programme will work towards building on already existing structures and activities on GBV and will focus on five thematic areas of: **Prevention**, **protection** to GBV survivors, effective **Prosecution** of cases (working with the Director of Public Prosecution, the Judiciary and the Police to ensure speedy prosecution of GBV cases), fostering **Partnerships**, and **programming** to strengthen communication and referral mechanisms on GBV responses and interventions within and across sectors.

The Ministry is also working in Partnership with the Healthcare Assistance Kenya (HAK), a charitable Non-Governmental Organization, to provide a 24 hours call service to survivors of GBV through Kenya's National Gender Violence Toll Free Hotline 1195. HAK provides immediate, yet independent and confidential, guidance to survivors of GBV in order to avoid fear and stigmatization.