



**HUMAN RIGHTS  
DISCOURSES  
IN KENYA'S  
COMMUNITY  
MEDIA**  
**A mapping report**





Journalists For Justice is a not-for-profit foundation registered in The Hague (Stiftung Journalists for Justice) and working to advance improved African journalistic capacity for social justice causes and accountability through training and effective online platforms and social media engagement.

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## INTRODUCTION

**T**his report provides a mapping assessment of community media organisations in Kenya and evaluates how 23 stations in 18 counties report human rights issues. It deepens our understanding of the current Kenyan community media landscape, especially the reporting of human rights issues. It also summarises recurrent hot-button human rights issues being covered by some community media and the challenges journalists face while reporting them.

In defining community media, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) gives a simplified definition, terming it as ‘run by, for and about the community.’<sup>1</sup> The community media are non-profit and very localised, unlike the commercial stations. Community media are domiciled within a specific geographical area and project the culture, values and issues within such an area.<sup>2</sup>

The second feature is diverse participation. Due to their inclusivity, community media bring on board different demographics within a local area without the social, economic or political discrimination that could be rampant with commercial media.<sup>3</sup> The third feature is that of storytelling and deliberation. Community media give space to narratives tailored to a specific area. Contrary to other stations that can focus on an entire country or region, community media have a narrow focus, giving them an advantage in airing relevant issues. Lastly, community media empower communities since they broadcast very localised matters close to the listeners.<sup>4</sup>

Community media has been lauded as crucial in democratic processes, social struggles and raising awareness among communities.<sup>5</sup> This is because it is closer and available to residents, accessible so as to encourage participation, accountable to the community, acceptable and affordable.<sup>6</sup> These guidelines distinguish community media from mainstream media. Banjane has also argued that commercial media considers its listeners as objects targeted in advertisements. In contrast, the community media treats them as subjects and participants<sup>7</sup> in the shows.

Scholars have debated and regarded the media as the primary framework for understanding the world, which is intertwined with peoples’ everyday life. In this sense, the media construct different understandings of the universe and contribute to the construction of morality by providing the frameworks for the appearance and the perception of the other.<sup>8</sup> This perspective stands out as relevant for reflecting on the media and its role with regard to human rights. If, as Silverstone argues, visibility raises awareness, consequently, considering these issues may bring up a sense of responsibility that human rights can use for its benefit.<sup>9</sup>

Secondly, this report makes the claim that the media are one of the domains in which human rights are constructed as meaningful.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, journalists and editors have the authority to define human rights in the mediated public, make issues visible, and certify that human rights violations are of public concern.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Okinyi, N.P. (2019). Communities’ Participation in Kenya through Community Radio Broadcasting Stations in Kenya on Development: A Critical Review. *Global Media Journal*, 17(32).

<sup>2</sup> Johnson, F & Menichelli, K. (2007). *What’s Going on in Community Media?* Benton Foundation.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, Pg. 3

<sup>5</sup> Milan, S. (2009). Four Steps to Community Media as a Development Tool. *Development in Practice*, 598–609.

<sup>6</sup> Sims, M et al. (2002). *Community Radio Technical Manual*. Open Society Foundation for South Africa.

<sup>7</sup> Banjane, A. (2007). *Community Radio in Nepal: A Case study of Community Radio Madanpokhara*. Ohio University.

<sup>8</sup> Silverstone, R. (2007), *Media and Morality – On the Rise of the Mediapolis*, Polity Press

<sup>9</sup> Ibid 26

<sup>10</sup> Nash, K. (2009), *The Cultural Politics of Human Rights: Comparing the US and UK*, Cambridge University Press pg 24

<sup>11</sup> ibid

**The community media are non-profit and very localised, unlike the commercial stations. Community media are domiciled within a specific geographical area and project the culture, values and issues within such an area.**



Some claim that the media exposes human rights violations and hence plays a fundamental role in publicising human suffering, which the audience is expected to respond to as good citizens with compassion and rational commitment.<sup>12</sup> In this way, the media frames the understandings of violence and violations generally. Through the media, people have become aware of the suffering of remote others and are challenged to include them in their moral consciousness.<sup>13</sup>

The International Council on Human Rights Policy published a report in 2002 that concluded that the media devote a great deal of attention to information on issues that involve human rights. But: 'despite all the attention given, the media fail to report much that ought to be known, at least in the estimation of those who are the victims. (...) Added coverage is due partially to the fact that governments and political leaders refer to human rights more often than they did (...) both in their formal statements of policy and political rhetoric.'<sup>14</sup>

The ICHRP report also states the lack of consensus on what constitutes human rights reporting among readers and journalists. Some interviewees in the report said that 'the media do not report human rights enough, others that they report in the wrong way or focus on the wrong subjects.'<sup>15</sup>

In line with the ICHRP findings, this mapping report aims to assist Journalists For Justice in implementing a project that seeks to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights through public dialogue. It also seeks to strengthen community media capacity in employing new narrative frames and storytelling tools to direct and lead discourses on human rights and justice in Kenya's public sphere.

The in-depth interviews conducted for this research demonstrate that proximity prevails as a preferred news criterion for community media. This is linked to financial constraints in the newsrooms, as editors often operate as budget managers and deal with the heavier weight of the production costs while deciding the news coverage of, among others stories, human rights-related issues. Further, as the report later discusses, the nature of the community media forces the journalists to report on very local issues that the audience relates with.

The first community radio station in Kenya was set up in Homa Bay in 1982, but it was later closed down because of politically motivated reasons.<sup>16</sup> However, the idea of running community radio stations did not end, and there are several currently in existence. Some of the stations include Mang'etele Radio in Makueni, Radio Maendeleo in Rarieda, Koch FM in Korogocho, Pamoja FM in Kibera and Ghetto Radio in Pumwani<sup>17,18</sup>. Some of the stations like Koch in Korogocho and Ghetto in Pumwani are directly owned and run by the Slums Information Development and Resource Centre (SIDAREC) and youth from Korogocho slums, respectively.<sup>19</sup> The stations broadcast matters specific to the local communities and use the 'Sheng' language – a patois of English and Kiswahili – that is common in their broadcasting radius. This characteristic affirms the arguments that have been cited, indicating that the community media reflect the values and cultures of their communities.

<sup>12</sup> Hoijer, B. (2004), 'The discourse of global compassion: the audience and media reporting of human suffering', *Media, Culture & Society* Vol. 26(4), pp 513–531

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*

<sup>14</sup> ICHRP (2002), *Journalism, Media and the Challenge of Human Rights Reporting*, International Council on Human Rights Policy, Versoix, Switzerland pg 5-6

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid* pg 6

<sup>16</sup> Bosibori, O. (2011). *Challenges in setting up and operating a community radio station in Kenya: Study of community radio stations in Nairobi*. University of Nairobi.

<sup>17</sup> Okinyi, N.P. (2019). Communities' Participation in Kenya through Community Radio Broadcasting Stations in Kenya on Development: A Critical Review. *Global Media Journal*, 17(32).

<sup>18</sup> Bosibori, O. (2011). *Challenges in setting up and operating a community radio station in Kenya: Study of community radio stations in Nairobi*. University of Nairobi, Pg. 15

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, Pg. 19



**The International Council on Human Rights Policy published a report in 2002 that concluded that the media devote a great deal of attention to information on issues that involve human rights. But: 'despite all the attention given, the media fail to report much that ought to be known, at least in the estimation of those who are the victims.**





**Despite being a unique and small-scale study, the research experienced time restrictions, which limited information the consultant could gather from documents availed plus the number of respondents reached.**

Community media has been vital in disseminating information about critical issues such as health, democracy and political awareness and economic empowerment. During the 2008 post-election violence, Pamoja and Koch FM broadcast messages of peace with a focus on the Kikuyu and Luo communities.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, during the 2013 elections, the Red Cross was able to broadcast messages of peace through the 'Gutuka' show, using the same stations.<sup>21</sup> Koch FM has also been disseminating information on how to avoid infectious diseases in Korogocho.<sup>22</sup> The evidence here affirms the central role that community radio plays in society.

This report presents a snapshot of 23 community media stations operating in Kenya. It is not representative of all existing stations. The consultant interviewed 23 journalists and media managers, and analysed their views to better understand the human rights issues they report in their stations. Respondents were sourced through purposive sampling and the snowballing approach. In the first instance, the interviews targeted counties where JFJ wants to roll out its project. Some did not have a community media house and were replaced. Journalists and media managers voluntarily participated in the interviews, and those who declined proposed respondents within the same media house. All responses from the respondents have been anonymised. The report also benefits from the consultant's knowledge and expertise in the issues under discussion.

Despite being a unique and small-scale study, the research experienced time restrictions, which limited information the consultant could gather from documents availed plus the number of respondents reached. Nevertheless, the data collected and analysed in this report provides a sound basis for JFJ to promote the inclusion of a human rights and justice lens in public dialogue through community media.

<sup>20</sup> Maweu, J. (2020, July 9). How community radio has contributed to building peace: a Kenyan case study. *The Conversation*. Retrieved November 8, 2021, from <https://theconversation.com/how-community-radio-has-contributed-to-building-peace-a-kenyan-case-study-141622#:~:text=Kenya%20has%20a%20vibrant%20radio,regional%20and%20private%20radio%20stations.&text=The%20country%20now%20has%2011,Ghetto%20FM%2C%20and%20>

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Mupusi, D. (2013). *The Place of Community radion in packaging and disseminating health messages on non-communicable diseases in slums: A case study of Koch FM*. University of Nairobi.





## FINDINGS

### Human rights stories are local

The study sought to understand which human rights issues are covered by the media. We also wanted to understand who are the primary sources of the information. The scope of human rights issues depends on the geographical location where the journalists are based. For instance, a journalist working for a station based in Kibra, an informal settlement in Nairobi, said they focus on police brutality, women rights issues on reproductive health, Children not accessing education and a general lack of basic needs for most of the listeners.<sup>23</sup>

Another journalist based in Tana River County cited issues of land, insecurity, and cattle rustling. Our human rights issues mainly are on security, whereby a fisherman goes fishing and is not protected by the Kenya Police from harassment by the Ugandan authorities," noted a journalist based in Siaya.<sup>24</sup> He also added that land disputes, especially involving widows, are rampant, and they cover such stories. "I have handled several cases of widows whereby the husband has died, and now the in-laws are not comfortable having her around, and so they come up with many stories to push her away directly or indirectly so that they can inherit her land."<sup>25</sup>

#### List 1: List of human rights issues per media house

Station	Human Rights issues
<b>Radio Osotua (Ngong/ Nairobi)</b>	Child abuse Environment, land issues
<b>Pamoja FM (kibra)</b>	Conflicts between the police and the people Lack of water Land issues Lack of land documentations The issue of Nubians not acquiring the 288 acres that belong to them Unable to access legal documentation i.e. ID, birth certificate Insecurity Extrajudicial killings
<b>Amani Center (Garsen)</b>	Gender-based violence Female genital mutilation
<b>Mwanedu radio station (Taita Taveta)</b>	Child abuse Female genital mutilation Domestic violence
<b>Radio Mikayi (Siaya)</b>	Rape cases Children rights
<b>Radio Domus (Ngong)</b>	Assault and fights Children rights Land issues
<b>Garbartula Fm (Isiolo)</b>	Insecurity Cattle rustling Drought
<b>Koch Fm (Korogocho)</b>	Police brutality Women rights issues Children rights Lack of basic needs

<sup>23</sup> Telephone interview with journalist, 4 November 2021

<sup>24</sup> Telephone interview with journalist, 5 November 2021

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*



**I have handled several cases of widows whereby the husband has died, and now the in-laws are not comfortable having her around, and so they come up with many stories to push her away directly or indirectly so that they can inherit her land."**



Station	Human Rights issues
<b>Mchungaji Fm (Maralal)</b>	Peace issues Marginalisation children rights
<b>Baliti Radio (Isiolo)</b>	Domestic violence
<b>Ngany Fm (Luanda/Vihiga)</b>	Gender violence, Women rights Journalists being attacked
<b>Radio Tumaini (Mombasa)</b>	Human-wildlife conflicts Drug abuse Lack of water supply
<b>Bulala FM (Busia)</b>	Rights to privacy Right to life Neglected public health centres Insecurity
<b>Kimuri Radio (Embu)</b>	Gender-based violence Children rights
<b>Ratego Radio (Siaya)</b>	Land issues Lack of water Education issues
<b>Radio Jangwani (Marsabit)</b>	Female genital mutilation Smuggling Human trafficking Gender-based violence
<b>Radio Thome (Kitui)</b>	Gender-based violence Criminal cases Social injustices Gender inequality Human trafficking
<b>Rameny Radio (Rongo)</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>Mtaani Radio (Dagoretti)</b>	No access to clean water Lack of water supply
<b>Sawanga Fm (Laikipia)</b>	Insecurity Human-wildlife conflicts Domestic violence
<b>Ruben Fm (Mukuru kwa Njenga)</b>	Right to education Right to life Right to access basic needs Freedom of worship Freedom of association
<b>Bus Radio (Kajiado)</b>	Misuse of powers by government officials Female genital mutilation
<b>Serian Radio (Maralal)</b>	Cattle rustling Gender-based violence Female genital mutilation Gender inequality
<b>Maa Fm (Suswa)</b>	Gender-based violence Female genital mutilation
<b>Ranet Radio (Kangema)</b>	Human rights generally Rights of married couples Educating parents about children rights Women rights when it comes to land issues
<b>Radio Mang'elele (Kibwezi)</b>	Respecting other people's rights Injustices Gender-based violence Irresponsible behaviours



Based on this outcome, the coverage of human rights issues signals a contextual influence on the journalistic agenda. The frequency of topics presented in the foregoing list gives an overview of the content of human rights-related news issues, which the various community media cover. Therefore, it is vital that JFJ, at the beginning of the capacity building and setting up of the human rights desks, establish the local human rights issues in every area. Journalists take into account audiences' considerations and prefer to report on what is familiar to their audiences.

Going further, there is a need for the training to increase their knowledge in using human rights frames. Most of the reporting, according to the respondents, is carried out on the basis of occurrence (what happened) yet there are other angles that could be explored. For example, Female Genital Mutilation stories could be reported as sexual and gender-based violence and not only as a retrogressive cultural issue. Lack of water and sanitation can be interrogated from an economic rights angle and tied to governance. The gaps in knowledge undermine the ability of the journalists to connect local news occurrences to human rights frames. The training by JFJ would thus increase journalists' ability to see human rights stories.

### Sources of stories

Almost all the respondents cited the Police, Village Elders, NGOs, Chiefs and community members as the most reliable sources of information on human rights. "The village elders are always on the ground when these things are happening, and so they have our contacts, and they know where our station is," said a respondent.<sup>26</sup>

Another noted that village elders cooperate and make information available to journalists and take part in talk shows to educate the community on human rights issues.<sup>27</sup> The local CSO members are key because "whenever something happens on the ground, people run to report to them first because of the level of trust they have in them."<sup>28</sup> Another respondent noted that the CSOs have better knowledge of national issues and how they affect the local environment.<sup>29</sup> Members of the community mostly share stories with the journalists and sometimes go to the stations to be interviewed.<sup>30</sup>

However, there is little connection between the human rights issues being covered and the role of duty bearers at the local and national level. This is because most of the stories are localised and the journalists tend to focus on the local duty bearers while most of the time, there is a bigger connection that can be made. For example, while reporting about police killings, there is a need to reference as sources institutions such as the Independent Policing Oversight Authority or the Internal Affairs Unit (IAU), which handle police accountability. JFJ in its intervention could increase the capacity of the journalists to expand sourcing to include other duty bearers at a higher level.

<sup>26</sup> Telephone interview with journalist, 4 November 2021

<sup>27</sup> Telephone interview with journalist, 6 November 2021

<sup>28</sup> Telephone interview with journalist, 6 November 2021

<sup>29</sup> Telephone interview with journalist, 9 November 2021

<sup>30</sup> Telephone interview with journalist, 6 November 2021



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**These security challenges are not unique to community media journalists. Despite the constitutional and statutory guarantees for media freedom, Kenyan journalists face threats, intimidation and arbitrary arrests while carrying out their work.**

## Challenges encountered while covering human rights stories

### Safety and security

Respondents noted that reporting on sensitive issues such as land, corruption, and security leads to threats, intimidation, arbitrary arrests and physical assaults. “Sometimes we get threats from the perpetrators saying they will close the radio station if we continue speaking about an issue they do not like,” said a journalist based in Samburu.<sup>31</sup> In Kibra, a journalist noted how they receive threats from cartels when they speak about water and electricity issues in the informal settlement.<sup>32</sup> This has forced them to be careful on the topics and practice self-censorship. In Eldoret, a journalist narrated how, when covering a protest, some police officers wanted him to delete the footage since they were using violence.<sup>33</sup> Others have been bullied through social media platforms, and they have decided to stop posting any stories.

These security challenges are not unique to community media journalists. Despite the constitutional and statutory guarantees for media freedom, Kenyan journalists face threats, intimidation and arbitrary arrests while carrying out their work. Between May 2020 and April 2021, Article 19 Eastern Africa recorded at least 51 attacks against individual journalists in the country.<sup>34</sup> Most of these cases are not investigated, and impunity continues to reign, emboldening the perpetrators.

Further, the country has retained laws that, in some of the statutes, continue to infringe on the right to freedom of expression and information, some of which are outlined below.

#### List 2: Problematic laws

1. Defamation Act (Cap 36)
2. Penal Code (Cap 63)
3. Books and Newspapers Act (Cap 111)
4. Preservation of Public Security Act (Cap 57)
5. Films and Stage Plays Act (Cap 222)
6. The Chief’s Act (Cap 128)
7. Official Secrets Act (Cap 187)
8. Public Archives and Documentation Service Act (2018)
9. Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act (2017)
10. Media Council Act (2013)
11. Kenya Information and Communication (Amendment) Act (2018)
12. Security Laws (Amendment) Act

Notably, some of the statutes entered into force during the colonial period. The 1967 Preservation of Public Security Act gives the president sweeping powers to censor, control, or prohibit information that is deemed a security risk. The Defamation Act and the Penal Code sanction criminal defamation, an offence often used to intimidate journalists. The Kenya Information and

<sup>31</sup> Telephone interview with journalist, 4 November 2021

<sup>32</sup> Telephone interview with journalist, 4 November 2021

<sup>33</sup> Telephone interview with journalist, 6 November 2021

<sup>34</sup> [https://www.article19.org/resources/kenya-world-press-freedom-day-2021/#:~:text=On%2024%20April%202021%2C%20police,River%20Development%20Authority%20\(TARDA\).](https://www.article19.org/resources/kenya-world-press-freedom-day-2021/#:~:text=On%2024%20April%202021%2C%20police,River%20Development%20Authority%20(TARDA).)



Communication Act, 2013, created a government-appointed Communications and Multimedia Appeals Tribunal with unfettered powers to impose penalties on media practitioners, including revocation of accreditation, seizure of property, and heavy fines of up to Ksh500,000 on journalists, and up to Ksh20 million on stations. These hefty fines have a chilling effect on freedom of expression and the media.

To mitigate these challenges, JFJ could consider incorporating modules on safety and protection as part of the capacity building exercises. The journalists could benefit from knowledge and skills on physical and digital protection, which they can use to reduce and manage threats. Further, the training could incorporate aspects of law and policy, in order to help the journalists to understand the legal limitations of their work.

### Lack of access to information

Lack of access to information and the secretive nature of Government was pointed out as a significant challenge for community media journalists. "Accessibility of government sources has been a challenge because some refuse to talk for no clear reasons," said a journalist in Murang'a County.<sup>35</sup> Another one in Nairobi noted, "When it comes to the administrative level, they [officials] are not ready to give any information and some of it is termed as classified, but when you look at it, you do not see anything that is classified."<sup>36</sup>

Kenya enacted the Access to Information Act (2016), which allows citizens to request information and data from government officials. Article 35 of the Constitution provides the overall framework for access to information. At the same time, Section 96 of the County Government Act (2016) stipulates that: "Every Kenyan citizen shall, on request, have access to information held by any county government or any unit or department".

Several county governments have also committed themselves to Open Government and have regularly made data on county budgets open to the public. In particular: Nyeri, Nairobi, and Kitui have led the way.<sup>37</sup> Further, the courts have emphasised that Open Government is part of Kenya's national values, therefore, all public bodies,<sup>38</sup> more so, all those in leadership positions should promote this ideal.<sup>39</sup>

However, the African Network of Constitutional Lawyers researched access to information in 2011 and reported that some civil servants in Kenya did not think the Government had a legal obligation to release information, and they often 'chose to err on the side of caution by not releasing information.'<sup>40</sup> Similar to the sentiments by respondents for this study, African Network of Constitutional Lawyers noted that, "there was no difference between what is sensitive information and what is not; even where information has been declared public it does not become public"<sup>41</sup> Seemingly, there is a deeply-entrenched culture of secrecy in public institutions with regard to access to public records. Most abide by a motto that the safer position is not to share information (than risk the repercussions of sharing).<sup>42</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Telephone interview with journalist, 4 November 2021

<sup>36</sup> Telephone interview with journalist, 9 November 2021

<sup>37</sup> International Budget Partnership, Kenya: How Much Budget Information are Counties Publishing Online? At: <https://www.internationalbudget.org/budget-work-by-country/ibps-work-in-countries/kenya/understanding-county-budgets/tracking-county-budget-information-kenya/>

<sup>38</sup> One of public service values includes transparency and provision to the public of timely, accurate information. See, Article 232 1(f), *Constitution of Kenya* (2010).

<sup>39</sup> See *Peter Kariuki v Attorney General*; *Nelson Kadison v Advocates Complaints Commission* (2013); *Peter Kariuki v AG* (leadership and integrity); *Family Care Limited v Public Procurement Administrative Review Board and another* (right to information is only applicable to Kenyans); *Wilson Thirimba Mwangi v DPP* (how to demonstrate a right to information).

<sup>40</sup> African Network of Constitutional Lawyers, 'Towards promoting access to information in Kenya', 2011, 20.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*



**Lack of access to information and the secretive nature of Government was pointed out as a significant challenge for community media journalists. "Accessibility of government sources has been a challenge because some refuse to talk for no clear reasons," said a journalist in Murang'a County.**



**Community media houses are by design owned by the community. This, however, has led to some challenges in reporting human rights issues. A journalist in Siaya noted that those not from the local ethnic group are sometimes discriminated against.**

While it was beyond this assignment to undertake content analysis of the media stories, it is important for JFJ to consider incorporating modules on making use of the legal and regulatory framework for access to information to deepen stories as well as engagement. Beyond obtaining information, the community media journalists need to engage in data journalism. There is a lot, for instance, that can be gained in analyses that use data to examine the trends and patterns in police violence or sexual and gender-based violence. Daily Nation's *Newsplex* and Citizen TV's Yvonne Okwara's *Explainer* are good examples of innovative use of data in reporting, and it could be replicated. The only way to realise the potential of the data is if it becomes accessible, understandable, and relevant. Local journalists who take on that challenge can serve as powerful agents of change.

### **Financial difficulties**

All the respondents indicated that their community media houses had limited financial means. This strains the capacity of journalists and the extent to which they can pursue human rights stories. "When you are doing some investigation and carrying out research, some of the issues we encounter are facilitation. You need to travel and talk to people, but you cannot follow the story conclusively if you do not have money," said a respondent.<sup>43</sup> Another journalist noted that the media house does not carry sensitive stories for fear of defamation. "It requires finances whenever you cover a story which is sensitive, and someone can take you to court, and if you do not have finances to pay, then you stop the story." Further, lack of finances means that the journalists can only cover a limited radius and sometimes do not conduct follow up stories.

### **Nature of community media**

Community media houses are by design owned by the community. This, however, has led to some challenges in reporting human rights issues. A journalist in Siaya noted that those not from the local ethnic group are sometimes discriminated against. To some residents, stories about their community "should be reported by one of their own". Another respondent in Murang'a said she has difficulties covering stories on gender-based violence, especially on women. As she narrated, "the husband started following up on the matter [of her news story] with the area Chief, and you know a community radio station is owned by the community. The manager did not want to pursue the story since the Chief is recognised in the society."<sup>44</sup> Another said he stopped following a story about a police officer who allegedly raped a woman since they all live in the same area where the media house is located.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Telephone interview with journalist, 4 November 2021

<sup>44</sup> Telephone interview with journalist, 4 November 2021

<sup>45</sup> Telephone interview with journalist, 5 November 2021



## CONCLUSION

**W**hat can be done to ensure that human rights stories receive more coverage and prominence in community media? The media houses can consider forming partnerships with civil society organisations to highlight various human rights issues occurring in the community. The journalists can provide a platform for actors, including duty bearers such as the Police and Chiefs, to speak out on violations taking place and also educate the community about various issues of interest.

To develop interest in reporting on human rights issues, journalists need to be trained on the issues. This will entail taking them through the different ways of seeing a story through the lenses of rights. The training should be periodic and ultimately lead to a pool of experts on human rights in the media houses. Further, the journalists and media houses can diversify the different modes of delivery, such as having radio dramas and talk shows on human rights. The journalists can also influence the listeners so that they will know their rights.

Active engagement for example in live talk-shows between the listeners and duty bearers have the potential to, in the long run, address the power distance between journalists, sources and the public. The listeners and journalists can also challenge narratives of the duty bearers using the human rights language, which could foster accountability. In addition, the media owners and managers should also be trained on the importance of journalists covering stories using a human rights angle. As one of the respondents noted, “we need to know how to cover these stories, especially when dealing with the victims because the way you cover the story, you might add injury to the problem or you will help solve it.”<sup>46</sup>

JFJ can source grants to support journalists reporting on human rights issues. These grants will go a long way in encouraging the media houses to focus on rights issues and increase community coverage and discussions.

To play their rightful roles, journalists should know to carry out their work safely. Individuals and media houses need to strengthen their safety and protection mechanisms. Respondents highlighted that the intimidation of the media has led to self-censorship, with some opting not to cover or work on what they would consider sensitive issues. The community media can partner with civil society organisations that support and build capacity of journalists and media houses to protect themselves and reduce threats that come about due to their reporting.

<sup>46</sup> Telephone interview with journalist, 4 November 2021



**To develop interest in reporting on human rights issues, journalists need to be trained on the issues. This will entail taking them through the different ways of seeing a story through the lenses of rights.**



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## ANNEX: PROFILES OF COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS

### Ruben FM

The station was launched in 2016 and operates from Mukuru Slums in Nairobi County. The station's slogan "Unganisha Jamii" guides its programming which focuses on education and entertainment. The geographical reach of the station is a radius of 5KM but reaches to an estimated 300,000 listeners. The issues that are handled by the station include politics and governance, health and nutrition, Gender Based Violence, insecurity among other issues. It is a standard requirement that its presenters and volunteers reside in Mukuru slums.

### Ghetto Radio

The station is located in Ngara area of Nairobi and was established in 2007. The station uses Sheng language for its broadcasts, a language that is largely used in the informal settlements and by the youth demographic. One of the most conspicuous themes handled by the station is on amplifying voices of human right defenders and advocating against extrajudicial killings by the police in areas like Mathare and Eastleigh.

### Mtaani Radio

The community station is located in Dagoretti area of Nairobi County. The station is run by the Mtaani Community Based Organization and focuses on increasing peoples' participation in political and economic processes, promoting peace and cohesion, and defending human rights.

### Oсотua Catholic Radio

The station broadcasts from Narok county and operates under the auspices of the Diocese of Ngong. The Radio programs are largely hinged on religious themes but it also focuses on peace matters drawing from the name "Oсотua" meaning peace in the Maasai language.

### Radio Maria Nairobi

The station, like Oсотua, is also run by the Catholic Church under the Diocese of Nairobi. Many of its programs are faith based but it also discusses issues of social and human interests.

### Koch FM

The station broadcasts from Korogocho slum in Nairobi County. The geographical reach for the station is a radius of 3 kilometres but has an estimated audience of around 250,000 listeners from the informal settlement. The station is run under a Community Based Organization. The main aim of the station is to deconstruct the negativity that has been associated with the informal settlements.

### Pamoja FM

The station is based in Kibera informal settlement. Established in 2007, at the height of the post-election violence, the key focus of the radio station is on peace. The station operates under the Pamoja Development Centre (PADEC) which is a community organization. The geographical coverage is a radius of 3 kilometres and a reach of 200,000 listeners.



### **Radio Waumini**

The station was established in 2003 and is operated by the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB). The main focus of the station is faith-based programs for the Catholic Church.

### **Radio Thome**

This is a Christian Station owned by the Catholic Diocese of Kitui. It broadcasts in Kitui, Machakos, Makueni and its environs.

### **Amani FM**

The station is based in Garsen town, Tana River County, and run by the Amani Centre, which is a Community Based Organization. It is focused on ICT and peace building activities. It has a geographical radius of 70 kilometres and audience reach of 180,000 listeners.

### **Mwanedu Radio Station**

The station transmits from Vuria Hills in Taita Taveta County. Initially, the station broadcasted in the Kitaita language but Kiswahili was introduced after the post-election violence as a means of fostering peace within the Coastal region. The station has an audience of about 560,000 listeners and focuses on areas like health, agriculture, land issues, ICT and entrepreneurship.

### **Serian Radio**

The station is located in Maralal Town of Samburu County. It first went on air in 2009 and blends both Samburu and Kiswahili languages. The geographical coverage is a radius of 120 kilometres with an audience of 120,000 listeners in both Laikipia and Samburu counties. The station promotes the local Samburu culture, focuses on social issues such as female genital mutilation and cattle rustling.

### **Watchman Radio**

The station broadcasts from Samburu County using the Swahili language.

### **Mchungaji FM**

The station broadcasts from Maralal in Samburu County. It is operated by Catholic Church, Diocese of Maralal.

### **Bus Radio**

The station was established in 2010 by a youth group bringing together, professionals and activists in Kajiado County under a community-based organization. The geographical reach is 3 kilometres with an audience of close to 40,000. The main focus of the station is on fostering peace.

### **Radio Domus**

The station is based in Ngong town of Kajiado county. The station is under the Koinonia community, a faith-based organization that is under the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB). The station broadcasts in the Swahili language, covers a geographical radius of 5 kilometres. The estimated audience is 120,000 listeners. It largely focuses on young people and gives them the opportunity to run the station.



### Radio Jangwani

The radio is a project of the Catholic Church diocese of Marsabit. The station largely airs documentaries and news focusing on peace.

### Bulala FM

The station broadcasts from Bunyala in Busia county. The station was established by the Kenya Meteorological Department with the help of the World Bank. The target audience are over 50,000 people affected by the floods in the Lower Nzoia Plains. The station is used as an early warning mechanism on floods.

### Kangema Ranet FM

Similar to Bulala, Kangema has been established by the Kenya Ranet (RadioNet) project because the area is prone to landslides. The Ranet project focuses on climate change and transmits weather information to the local communities using internet and radio.

### Sawanga FM

The station broadcasts from Laikipia county and is the short name for "Sauti ya Wanjiku Ngarua". The station has an estimated audience of 800,000 people within a radius of 100 kilometres. The station broadcasts in Swahili, Kikuyu, Kalenjin and Turkana languages. The key objective is on the peaceful coexistence in the area which has both farmers and pastoralists from diverse ethnic groups.

### Ratego Radio

The station broadcasts from Siaya county and focuses on People Living with Disabilities (PWDs), climate change and health. The coverage extends to Busia, Homa Bay, Vihiga and Kisumu counties. The station can also reach the Eastern Uganda area.

### Radio Baliti

The station broadcasts from Isiolo County. The coverage is a radius of 130 kilometres with an estimated audience of 300,000 listeners. The broadcast languages are both Kiswahili and Borana. The radio station handles a number of issues in its programs like livestock development among the pastoral communities, gender equality and governance within Isiolo county.

### Shahidi FM

The station operates in Isiolo county and is under the Catholic church Isiolo Diocese. Isiolo region being prone to conflicts, the focus of the station is on peaceful co-existence of communities.

### Garbatula FM

The station was established in 2016 due to financial difficulties. When it operated, it provided real-time locally tailored weather and climate forecasts and covered topical issues affecting the local community such as agriculture and health. A consortium of several organisations, led by the Merti Integrated Development Programme (MID-P), has rolled out plans to revive the station.



### **Mitume Radio**

The station is run by the Catholic Church under the Diocese of Kitale in Trans-Nzoia County and is focused on faith-based broadcasting.

### **Oltoilo le Maa FM**

The station broadcasts in the IMAasai language and is located in Suswa area of Narok county. The station resembles the Bulala FM in Busia, established by the Kenya Meteorological Department as part of the RANET Project. The station alerts locals on the floods and drought that affect the area. The station covers a radius of 100 kilometres with an audience of 100,000 listeners. Apart from the focus on flooding the station also focuses on other social themes like human rights, health and livestock farming.

### **Kwale Ranet**

The station has also been established by the meteorological department because the Kwale area is prone to drought and malaria.

### **Rameny FM**

The station broadcasts from Migori county using Dholuo language. The station is owned by Winam CBO and began operating in 2015. The geographical coverage is a radius of 50 kilometres with an audience of 500,000 listeners. Apart from peace, the station also focuses on programs targeting agriculture, health and education.

### **Radio Amani**

The station operates under the Catholic Church Diocese of Nakuru and is primarily focused on peace and reconciliation.

### **Ekiola Kiona**

The station is youth-run and broadcasts from Mfangano Island using the Suba language. The station's target audience is the Abasuba community and also focuses on health issues within the area.

### **Wega FM**

The station is under the Catholic Church, Diocese of Meru. Similar to the many other faith-based community stations, Wega FM is focused on peace.

### **Mugambo Jwetu**

Operates under the Mugambo Jwetu CBO. The station broadcasts in both Kimeru and Kiswahili languages. The geographical reach is 30 kilometres with an audience of 450,000 listeners. The target demographic of the station is the age bracket between 25-35 years.

### **Ata Nayeche FM**

Established by the Nayanae-Emeyen Group and focuses on peaceful co-existence of the Turkana community and the refugees. The facilitation of its establishment in Kakuma was done by the International Organization on Migration (IOM). It covers a geographical radius of 70 kilometres with an estimated audience of 120,000 listeners. The focus group of the station's programs are the refugee community.



### **Radio Akicha**

The station broadcasts from Lodwar and is under the Catholic Church.

### **Echami FM**

The station broadcasts from Lokichar in Turkana County and has been instrumental in providing information on health and peace. Some of its key partners are USAID and the county government of Turkana.

### **Upendo**

The station is under the Catholic Church through the Diocese of Eldoret. The station broadcasts in both Kalenjin language and Swahili.

### **Radio Mang'elete**

This is the oldest community radio station in Kenya. The station broadcasts from Makueni County and blends both the Kamba language with Kiswahili. The geographical reach is 50 kilometres with an estimated reach of 250,000 listeners. Its main focus is development of the Kibwezi sub-county community.

### **Rware FM**

The station is managed by Rware Media Services in Nyeri County and broadcasts in Kikuyu and Kiswahili languages. The station has a geographical radius of 35 kilometres with an estimated audience of 350,000 listeners. It is focused on human development.

### **Mikayi FM**

It broadcasts in Siaya, Homabay and Migori Town mainly using Dholuo language.

### **Ngany Ranet**

Nganyi RANET is a community radio station set up by the Kenya Meteorological Service to target communities vulnerable to climatic change. The station is based at RANET Climate Resource center in Luanda town, Vihiga County. The radio station is mainly used to disseminate weather and climate information. The Radio broadcasts to approximately 25 – 30 Kilometres radius. Nganyi RANET is among five other RANET community radio stations under the Kenya Meteorological Department (KMD), as part of the RANET-Kenya project.

### **Wajir Community Radio**

Wajir Community Radio (WCR) was established in 2005 by community members resident in Wajir County. The radio covers 140km radius with an estimated audience of 270,000 people. It covers the larger Wajir County including Wajir East, South, North and West. The main aim of the radio station is to empower the marginalized and vulnerable members of the pastoralist communities. It targets voiceless members in the community who include indigenous pastoralists, people with disabilities, internally displaced persons and other disadvantaged minorities. The radio also seeks to enhance communication and advocacy among the pastoral communities of the county. This would enable them share their development agendas.

### **Ref FM**

REF FM is a community-based radio station in refugee settlement Kalobeyei, next to refugee camp Kakuma. The station is run by and for refugees and host communities. It aims at giving refugees a voice and a sense of community. It is funded by various donors and sponsors.









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IN KENYA'S  
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MEDIA**  
**A mapping report**

