



YOUTH SAFETY AWARENESS INITIATIVE

Press Statement

Sexual Assault of a Young Female Motorists by Boda Boda Operators

8th March 2022

“If they could attempt to lynch me, what would have happened to one of you? You could have been reduced to ashes in less than two minutes and they would probably burn the car, too.”- Gen (Rtd)Karangi – Former Chief of Defence Forces – 31st October 2020.

If not for anything else, this poignant statement by the country’s former top military officer should have served as a wake-up call on the need to tame rogue and patently criminal elements within the fast-growing boda boda industry.

We have instead allowed menacing and undisciplined elements within the industry to form the most potent and mobile organized gangs in certain parts of the country. The brazen nature in which they break traffic laws on our roads in full glare of law enforcement agencies, unanswered questions as to whether their motorbikes are insured to dangerously carry multiple pillion passengers or not, or whether, the seemingly underage riders in their midst have riding licenses is a pointer to the sway they hold.

Yesterday’s very unfortunate Wangari Maathai Road incident involving a lady motorist stands out for one peculiar thing. Some **members of the public joined the marauding boda boda gangs in sexually molesting the victim.** That is how low as a nation we have sunk.

Where are our values as a people? How could that sad incident happen on a busy highway and not one person saw it fit to come to the rescue of the victim? Is this not the same attitude that informs our indifference when our neighbours, friends, work colleagues and even relatives are subjected to repeated abuse by persons well known?

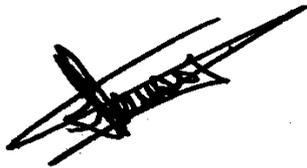
Are we not equally guilty when we shield perpetrators from facing the law in the false belief that we are protecting the “family” or “societal image?” Does it not prick our conscience when we pretend to mourn victims of violence yet we had it in our power to save them from abuse when they were alive? Shame on our pretentious nature that sheds premium social media tears but cannot stand up to be counted when it matters most on issues sexual and gender-based violence.

This is not a gender war. Neither is it a class war. This is a targeted war being waged on the soul of our nation. It is a war we must fight together and win together. It is time we restored our pride and dignity as a Kenyan people.

While we expect the law enforcement agencies to act with speed and restore order and sanity in the sector without victimizing innocent, law abiding operators, we on the other hand expect officials of the boda boda associations to work with law enforcement agencies in identifying, profiling and weeding out criminal elements in their midst. The few minority rotten apples must not be allowed to sully the industry which has become a big employer.

Crime Si Poa calls on all its members and all young people countrywide to take leadership in helping transform this sector for the better good of all.

Signed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pete Ouko', written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Pete Ouko
Executive Director, Crime Si Poa.