



ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE OF KENYA

PRESS STATEMENT

STATEMENT ON THE UTUMISHI GIRLS ACADEMY FIRE TRAGEDY

The Environment Institute of Kenya (EIK) joins all Kenyans in mourning and expressing profound sorrow following the devastating fire tragedy at Utumishi Girls Academy in Gilgil, Nakuru County. This tragic incident has reportedly claimed the innocent lives of several students, left many others injured, and some learners still unaccounted for according to reports.

EIK expresses its deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved families, students, teachers, and all those affected by this heartbreaking tragedy. We also wish a quick recovery to the learners and staff currently receiving medical treatment, trauma counselling, and psychosocial support.

This unfortunate incident once again underscores the urgent need for strengthened compliance with environmental health, occupational safety, institutional risk management, and school facility safety standards across learning institutions in Kenya.

In line with the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, and the Children Act, 2022, which guarantee every child the right to education, dignity, safety, protection, and a clean and healthy environment, EIK calls upon all institutions and relevant authorities to prioritize learner safety, child protection, and institutional preparedness.

EIK further commends the ongoing emergency response and child protection interventions being coordinated by government agencies, including the deployment of child protection officers and children services personnel on the ground to coordinate immediate interventions. These efforts include safeguarding affected learners, supporting family tracing and reunification, facilitating emergency child protection services, and establishing family support and information desks to assist parents and guardians. We also acknowledge the coordination of psychosocial support and trauma counselling services for survivors, bereaved families, teachers, and first responders to support emotional recovery and mental well-being.

As a professional body committed to promoting professionalism in environmental management for sustainable development in Kenya, we stand ready to work closely with the Ministry of Education, the Directorate of Occupational Safety and Health Services (DOSHS), county governments, emergency response agencies, school administrations, Kenya Red Cross, and other stakeholders to support enhanced compliance with school facility audit requirements and safety protocols.

EIK particularly emphasizes the importance of:

- a) Regular school safety and facility audits;
- b) Compliance with fire preparedness and emergency response measures;
- c) Adequate dormitory occupancy and ventilation standards;
- d) Functional emergency exits and evacuation systems;
- e) Routine environmental health and safety inspections; and
- f) Capacity building on institutional safety management and disaster preparedness.

We further urge all learning institutions to strengthen emergency preparedness systems and institutional response mechanisms to prevent similar tragedies in the future.

EIK also joins the Ministry in urging the public, media houses, and all stakeholders to uphold the dignity, privacy, and protection of affected learners and families by refraining from sharing graphic images, identities of minors, or unverified information related to the tragedy.

We urge all institutions to treat safety compliance not merely as a regulatory obligation, but as a moral and institutional responsibility aimed at protecting lives and safeguarding the well-being of learners.

EIK remains committed to contributing professional expertise and fostering multi-sector collaboration towards safer, resilient, and compliant learning environments for all learners in Kenya.

May the souls of the departed rest in eternal peace, and may the affected families find strength and comfort during this difficult time.

Environment Institute of Kenya (EIK)

Passion for Environment

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