

## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

**Media Contact**

Jerry Abuga | Lorine Achieng  
Tel: +254-20-2737058 | +254-723 99 91 58 | +254-723 79 50 20  
Email: [communications@mediacouncil.or.ke](mailto:communications@mediacouncil.or.ke)

Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **ADVISORY TO JOURNALISTS ON REPORTING VIOLENT CRIME, DEATH AND TRAGEDIES**

The Media Council of Kenya notes with concern that recent coverage of deaths occurring within apartments and other places is in breach of certain sections of the Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism in Kenya.

Media reporting of these deaths, aptly branded '*femicide*' must remain factually accurate and objective, as opposed to being sensational and depicting gender biases. Such stories must bear no hint of stereotyping of any form and must not be seen to confirm certain social prejudices.

The Council has, however, observed that the media has joined a bandwagon making the crimes look like a battle of the genders instead of clearly and objectively reporting on the issues surrounding such incidences and drawing verifiable patterns, if any, to help those responsible design appropriate interventions.

The Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism in Kenya stipulates that journalists shall be *Accurate and Fair* to ensure that all subjects of news coverage are treated with respect and dignity, showing compassion to victims of crime or tragedy. Sections 13 of the Code relating to *Privacy* requires that the public's right to know shall be weighed against the privacy rights of the news subjects.

Sadly, it has been noted that the privacy of families bereaved or affected has been infringed upon by overzealous journalists. In the most extreme, victim-shaming appears to be normalised by the media. We have witnessed incidents where journalists literally invade homes of grieving families uninvited and appear to parade relatives in deep distress.

The section on *Obscenity, Taste and Tone in Reporting* explicitly prohibits publication of photographs showing mutilated bodies, bloody incidents and abhorrent scenes unless the publication or broadcast of such photographs strictly serve public interest.

If it is absolutely necessary to report certain gruesome details of deaths and/or injury, the Code requires that alerts be issued to warn viewers or readers that the information being published contains horrific images or description. The media should be careful against implying patterns or divisions unless credible authorities have reported so.

Professional Media reporting of such and other incidences should be clearly distinguishable from other social media users regardless of the platform being utilised.

The Media Council of Kenya calls upon the media to reflect and evaluate its reportage of such incidences so far, and review and constantly refer to the Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism in Kenya.

Issued in Nairobi on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024  
For and on behalf of the Media Council of Kenya

**David Omwoyo Omwoyo, MBS**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & SECRETARY TO THE COUNCIL**