

PRESS STATEMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DISTURBING FOOTAGE IN A SECTION OF MEDIA

The Media Council of Kenya has noted with concern the blatant disregard of the Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism in Kenya by a section of the media while reporting on a fire incident at Buruburu Girls High School in Nairobi on 31st October 2021.

During the above incident, the media houses used an amateur video during their prime-time news bulletins that contained disturbing images and video footage of schoolgirls jumping from the third floor of a dormitory on fire. The media houses also posted graphical videos on their social media platforms of the students escaping through windows.

This contravened clauses 5, 15 and 21 on **Accountability, Intrusion into Grief and Shock** and **Use of Pictures and Names**. The media is required to exercise caution in the use of pictures and video in line with the Code of Conduct. Further, in adherence to ethical practice and sensitivity of such matters, media houses are required to blur and issue a viewer discretion a prior to airing such content.

The Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism in Kenya states;

- *In case involving personal grief of shock, inquiries shall be made with sensitivity and discretion.*
- *Pictures of grief and disaster shall be discouraged in reportage.*
- *Journalists shall present news with integrity and common decency and respect the dignity of the audience as well as the subject of news.*

While media can use user-generated content, its required of them to use professional judgement and apply journalistic ethics in determine the broadcast of the same. In cases where such content is ascertained to be true, utmost caution should be taken prior to use.

The concerned media houses should have taken into consideration the impact of the footage especially to the families of the affected students.

We further advise the media, being corporate citizens, to be at the forefront in educating members of the public on safety protocols when dealing with disasters such as fires and ensuring that their subjects are safe. Always remember to put safety first.

We caution media houses, editors, journalists and media practitioners against airing content that breach the Code of Conduct as severe penalties will be administered in line with the Media Council Act, 2013, including engaging the Complaints Commission to issue appropriate sanctions.



David Omwoyo Omwoyo

Chief Executive Officer & Secretary to the Council