

Report from *Political Accountability and Social Justice in Mathare* forum in Kosovo, Mathare (Hospital ward)—October 10<sup>th</sup> 2015

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This forum was an activity of the Mathare Social Justice Centre (MSJC), and particularly the political accountability department, aimed at enlightening the community about their rights and getting their leaders to be politically accountable. The turn up was very good; around 150 people from the community assembled in the Democratic Party hall where the forum was held.

The major themes that came up during the discussion were poor sanitation and drainage, poverty, police brutality, political unaccountability, tribalism, corruption, extrajudicial killings and insecurity. Also the youths in Mathare are now jobless following the NYS scandal of CS Ann Waiguru. These jobs were very very important to the youths; they kept them busy and earned them some money and this enabled them to afford basic needs and pay rent. When the jobs were stopped many youths became desperate since they have little or no qualification for decent jobs and resorted to stealing. This is when extrajudicial killings happen at a high rate and that's how we lose the vibrant youths of Mathare.

About hygiene and sanitation there are not enough toilets and bathrooms for the residents. There is also a shortage of water. The drainage system in Mathare needs a serious upgrade. Members of the community are exposed to outbreak of diseases such as cholera and typhoid. At the time of writing this report there is an outbreak of cholera in Mathare. In Hospital ward 2 people have died; 1 was a standard

8 pupil at Mathari Old Primary School who died in a span of three hours after eating an orange he had bought from a kiosk. The other was a woman who died while being rushed to the hospital. To prevent more deaths a village elder has being given medicine to give to anyone who might fall victim to cholera.



We are still beggars here in Mathare and this is largely due to the leaders we elect. Our leaders are politically unaccountable. They do not inform the public about what is going on or what they are doing. Poverty causes people to steal and this increases insecurity. We need to fight for Mathare. We deserve a better life too. Tribalism and nepotism should not be virtues that we practice. For example, it's very hard for one to get a CDF bursary form due to nepotism and tribalism. Also there is a primary school being built over land that was a playground for children; there is already a primary school and what the public wanted was a secondary school. So will this be a landmark? Mathare Social Justice Centre, Mathare Radio and Bunge la Mwananchi will be in charge of getting more information on this and organising a petition against it.

Cases of rape are also on the rise. Recently, there was a case of a popular person raping a minor and when the public found out they subjected him to mob injustice and nearly killed him. He was later arrested by Muthaiga police. There are other similar cases.

On the way forward of this discussion, people agreed that the next election they should elect a homegrown leader; a leader who perfectly understands their needs because he or she is familiar with them. Also a campaign *Mathare si ya mamako* meaning Mathare doesn't belong to your mother was launched at this forum. This is a campaign to stop land grabbing and also for political accountability to discourage politicians from other parts of the country who come to ask for our votes, and who give us some small money to influence us to vote for them. People agreed not to be bought cheaply during

elections. The current leaders in Mathare have done little or nothing to better our lives. We want leaders who are accountable and available. People also asked for a Facebook group for Mathare Social Justice Centre to connect easily and talk about their issues to try and to find possible solutions. The Facebook group was formed shortly after the forum. More political accountability and sensitization forums and campaigns were requested by the public.



Special thanks to members of the public who attended and participated in this forum, to Mathare radio , Bunge La Mwananchi, Peace Brigade International, Katiba Institute for the constitutions and books, and Waikwa Wanyoike; thank you for your comradeship.