



Kenya Medical Association

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

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25th October 2024

Kenya Medical Association Human Rights Committee Statement on Human Rights Violations in the Ongoing Medical Officer Intern Withdrawal of Services

The ongoing withdrawal of services by medical officer interns in Kenya highlights critical human rights concerns that require urgent attention. Intern doctors are vital to the healthcare system, acting as a crucial link between medical education and the delivery of healthcare services. Their decision to withdraw services, primarily due to delayed payments, poor working conditions, and inadequate support, reflects deeper systemic issues within the healthcare system. As we examine the implications of this situation, it is evident that the rights of both the healthcare providers and the patients they serve are being compromised.

Right to Fair and Decent Working Conditions

Article 41 of the Constitution of Kenya guarantees the right to fair labor practices, including decent working conditions and timely remuneration. However, medical officer interns have faced chronic delays in salary payments, insufficient allowances, and substandard working environments. These challenges are exacerbated by excessive workloads and insufficient resources, leading to burnout and diminished quality of care to patients. This situation violates their right to fair labor standards and dignity at work, with the government failing to fulfill its responsibility to these young healthcare professionals effectively.

Right to Health

The right to health is enshrined in Article 43 of the Constitution of Kenya and in various international human rights instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The withdrawal of services has disrupted healthcare provision, particularly in public hospitals where medical officer interns play a vital role. As a result, patients, especially those from vulnerable backgrounds relying on public healthcare services, are being denied access to essential health services. The government's inability to resolve the situation and restore uninterrupted healthcare services infringes on the right to health, endangering the lives and well-being of many Kenyans.

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Right to Dignity

The interns' prolonged struggle for fair remuneration and safe working conditions undermines their right to dignity. The government has an obligation to respect, protect, and fulfill the human rights of all its citizens, including workers. Withholding interns' rightful wages, exposing them to unsafe working environments, and disregarding their grievances constitutes a serious violation of their dignity. Furthermore, the emotional and psychological burden of uncertainty regarding their employment status deepens the breach of their human rights.

Conclusion

The ongoing withdrawal of services by medical officer interns in Kenya underscores broader challenges within the country's healthcare system and is a clear manifestation of human rights violations. The Kenyan government must act swiftly to address the interns' grievances, ensuring their rights to fair labor conditions while safeguarding the right to health for all citizens. Sustainable solutions must be implemented to prevent further harm and rights violations for both healthcare workers and patients. Failure to address these issues will erode trust in the healthcare system and threaten the well-being of the public and healthcare providers alike.



DR. DIANA MARION
SECRETARY GENERAL

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