

Statement on the ongoing Anti-Finance Bill 2024 Protests

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 27, 2024

The Centre for Fiscal Affairs (CFA) wishes to express its deepest and sincere condolences to friends and families whose loved ones were killed by the excess use of force by security apparatus. It is indeed difficult to fathom that the Government which swore to uphold and protect the Constitution of Kenya that guarantees, among others, the right to life and the right to peaceably picket could turn against its own people and convert a hitherto peaceful expression of displeasure with the government over the Finance Bill 2024, which is a legislative instrument meant to raise additional revenue for purposes of providing budgetary support, into a state-sponsored violence and mayhem on the innocent Kenyans. It is indeed a shame that what could have been avoided had to happen!

The State not only unleashed violence on its citizen but also oversaw the loss of innocent lives. Media reports place the death toll at over ten people. The loss of more than ten lives is a sombre reminder of the gravity of the issues at hand and the urgent need for a sober and an inclusive dialogue rooted in empathy and actionable solutions.

The Finance Bill 2024, much like the bread and cake in the case of the French Revolution of 1789, symbolises a tipping point for the Kenyan populace. It is not merely a fiscal policy; it is a catalyst that has made the fundamental and deep-seated issues our society—especially our young people—face today a priority.

Kenyan youth are grappling with several socio-economic challenges, one of which is the severe and disheartening unemployment crisis, despite the current regime's optimistic promises of job creation. The proposed finance bill, which introduces additional taxes and financial burdens, is seen as exacerbating the struggles of this already vulnerable demographic. The ongoing protests embody this frustration and demand greater inclusivity in the decision-making process.

For the general public, the Finance Bill, 2024 represents an increase in the cost of living and a reduction in disposable income, exacerbating the financial strain on households already burdened by high taxation and economic instability. The quest for fiscal justice echoes the sentiments of many who feel the weight of policies that are seemingly detached from the lived realities of everyday Kenyans.

The protests are, therefore, a clarion call for a more equitable fiscal policy framework that prioritizes the welfare of the people over revenue generation at any cost. It is a demand for a government that listens, understands, and acts in the best interests of its citizens.

The Centre for Fiscal Affairs urges the government to recognize these protests as more than just a reaction to a single bill. Rather, they reflect a deeper crisis of governance and trust. We, therefore, urge the government to heed the voices of its citizens, particularly the youth, and to recognize the broader implications of the unrest we are witnessing.

To the policymakers, we urge you to engage in open dialogue with all stakeholders to formulate policy solutions that address the root causes of the current crisis. This includes creating job opportunities for the youth, being more aggressive in the fight of corruption, ensuring fair taxation, and meaningful involvement of the citizens in the governance of the country.

As we remember those who died fighting for justice and good governance, let us pledge to develop a Kenya that cherishes every citizen and provides opportunities for everyone to thrive. The route forward necessitates a collaborative effort and a renewed commitment to the principles of equity, justice, and good governance.

Centre for Fiscal Affairs (CFA) is an independent research and policy advocacy think tank working to promote and advocate for greater fiscal transparency, accountability, and participatory governance for the realization of a just, fair, and strong society.

Contacts:

Email: info@fiscalhub.org | Mob: +254720-327-370 | X: [@CFAGlobal](https://twitter.com/CFAGlobal)