



## **Solidarity Statement by Zamara Foundation on the Silencing of Butere Girls**

We are outraged by the violent response against the girls of Butere Girls High School. Tear gas was fired. Students were arrested. Their only act was to speak their truth through art. This is a direct attack on the confidence, voice, and political imagination of girls. It reflects a system that punishes girls for thinking critically, questioning authority, and daring to take up space. The girls stepped onto that stage with courage and clarity. Through their performance, they spoke truths many fear to name. Instead of being supported, they were attacked, proof of a system that refuses to nurture girls as leaders, voice and agency especially when they challenge power and speak on governance.

Silencing the Butere Girls goes beyond an isolated act, it exposes systems that continue to normalize violence against girls who speak up. This moment demands more than statements of concern. It calls for a radical shift in how power is held and challenged. Schools should be spaces where girls are supported to think freely, question boldly, and lead without fear. The law and institutions must stop protecting power and start protecting girls.



The strength shown by the Butere Girls is a clear reminder that girls are already leading the fight for justice, often with little support and at great personal risk. What they faced should force us to confront how this country treats bold, outspoken girls. It's also a chance to do better, to create spaces where their voices are not punished but protected, where their leadership is recognized as essential to building a more just and equal society.

The ongoing violence against these brave girls reveals just how tightly patriarchal power grips public spaces and conversations. Every attempt to punish and silence them feeds a culture that fears and suppresses bold, transformative voices. Their resistance matters—and it demands more than outrage. We call for full accountability from those who ordered and executed these attacks, and a deep, urgent review of the systems and policies that continue to enable such violations of girls' rights.

