



## ADDRESS REBECCA CHEPTEGEI'S MURDER

[KAMPALA, 07-09-2024] – Women's Probono Initiative (WPI) stands outraged by the brutal murder of Olympian Rebecca Cheptegei, who fell victim to a vicious act of gender-based violence that has claimed the life of yet another Ugandan woman. We offer our deepest condolences to her family, particularly her two young daughters, whose future has been shattered by a system that consistently fails to protect women and girls. The systemic negligence of gender-based violence is in itself an act of violence against women. Women are not disposable; their deaths are not mere statistics, and we will not allow their voices to be silenced.

Rebecca's murder is not an isolated event. Uganda and many parts of the world are witnessing an epidemic of violence against women. The murders of fellow athletes Agnes Tirop and Damaris Mutua are further evidence of a global crisis of femicide. Globally, every 11 minutes, a woman or girl is killed by a partner or family member, according to the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime. In Uganda, 71% of the total number of victims in 2023 were women and girls according to the Uganda Police Force Annual Crime Report of 2023.

While Rebecca Cheptegei was murdered in Kenya by a Kenyan national, we urge the Ugandan government to explore avenues for cross-border legal collaboration under regional and international human rights law. Uganda and Kenya are signatories to key legal frameworks such as the **Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol)** and **CEDAW**, which obligate both countries to address violence against women and ensure justice is served.

Rebecca Cheptegei was more than an Olympic athlete—she was a beacon of strength, resilience, and inspiration for women across Uganda, striving to break barriers in a male-dominated sport. Her murder is an indication of a culture that continues to permit, perpetuate, and normalize the subjugation and slaughter of women under the guise of tradition, power, and indifference.

WPI strongly condemns this act of femicide and call for the following:

1. An immediate, transparent, and comprehensive investigation into the femicide of Rebecca Cheptegei in collaboration with the Kenyan

Government. Justice for Rebecca must not become yet another example of failing commitment to women's safety, where perpetrators of gender-based violence roam free.

2. Ending harmful traditional practices that encourage gender-based violence: The root of gender-based violence lies in entrenched patriarchal norms, harmful traditional practices, and systemic inequality that devalue women's lives. We call for massive, urgent public re-education campaigns to dismantle the cultural bedrock of male supremacy that makes these murders possible.
3. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and the Ugandan Parliament urgently allocate resources for the protection of women, strengthen monitoring and implementation mechanisms for the Domestic Violence Act, and create safe spaces for women to report violence without fear of retribution.

WPI stands unwavering in our commitment to end violence and discrimination against women and girls in Uganda. We call upon every Ugandan, every civil society organization, and every government body to stand with us in dismantling the structures that perpetuate femicide. Let us fight together to create a future where women can live, thrive, and achieve their dreams—free from fear, violence, and oppression.

WPI will continue to provide free legal representation to survivors of gender-based violence and the families of femicide victims. We are prepared to mobilize legal resources to hold perpetrators and state actors accountable in cases where justice has been denied.

For more information about WPI, please visit our website at [www.womenprobono.org](http://www.womenprobono.org), contact us on our toll-free line: +256 (0) 800-220645, or email [info@womenprobono.org](mailto:info@womenprobono.org).