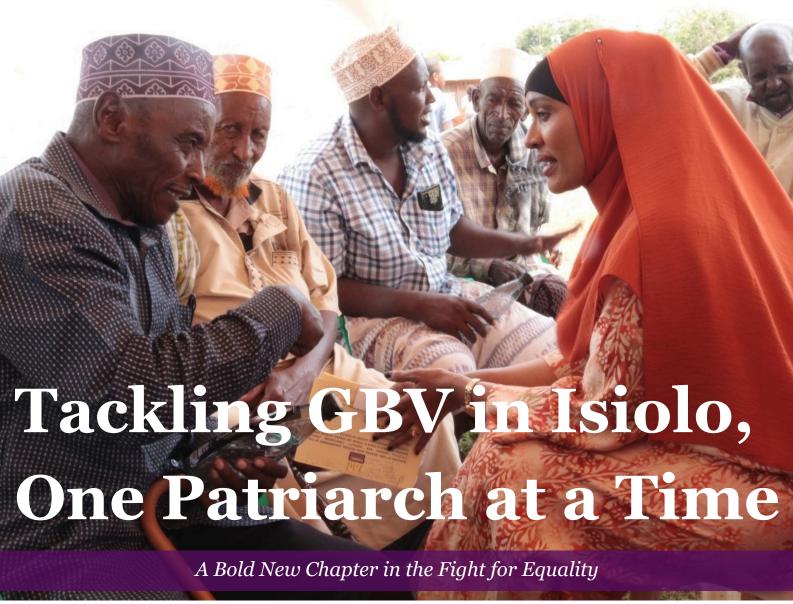
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Equality Bulletin



In the windswept plains of Isiolo County, where the sun scorches the earth and tradition runs deep in the veins of the Borana people, a new kind of revolution is quietly gaining momentum — one that may finally tip the scales in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV). It is not driven by loud protests or court battles, but by something far more powerful: honest conversations and courageous hearts.

At the forefront of this transformative movement is Hon. Rehema Jaldesa, Chairperson of the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC). In the past two weeks, she has led the Commission on a high-stakes mission in Isiolo — one that didn't just aim to raise awareness, but to reshape mindsets and reclaim justice at the very core of community life. And she came home to do it.



NJustice at the Doorstep: NGEC's Legal Aid Clinics Restore Hope and Resolve Festering Disputes in Isiolo



NGEC Deepens Roots in Isiolo: A Bold Push to Bring Equality Services Closer to Communities



Dignity Behind Bars: NGEC Champions Justice, Protection and Healing for Incarcerated Mothers in Isiolo

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APRIL 2025

A Message from the Chief Executive Officer

I am honoured to introduce the 13th Edition of the NGEC Equality Bulletin, which is dedicated to the innovative approach of addressing gender-based violence (GBV) by empowering men as champions of change and advocates against GBV. This transformative tactic, led by our Chairperson, Hon. Rehema Jaldesa, focuses on engaging men in the fight against GBV, recognizing their crucial role in shaping community attitudes and behaviors.

In addition to this initiative, the Bulletin highlights the Commission's ongoing commitment to providing free legal aid clinics as part of our Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) efforts. These clinics offer survivors of GBV crucial legal support and guidance, ensuring access to justice without financial barriers. Through these combined efforts, the Commission is steadfast in its mission to create a more just, equitable, and safe society for all.

Purity Ngina, PhD, MBS
Chief Executive Officer
National Gender and Equality Commission



THE COMMISSION



Hon. Rehema Jaldesa Chairperson



Thomas Okoth Koyier, **EBS Vice Chairperson**



Caroline N. Lentupuru, **MBS**, **HSC Commissioner**



Michael Nzomo Commissioner



Dr. Margaret Karungaru, **MBS**Commissioner





A Bold New Chapter in the Fight for Equality



NGEC Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa holds a spirited dialogue with Borana elders in Kinna, Isiolo County, rallying traditional leadership in the grassroots campaign to end gender-based violence.

In the windswept plains of Isiolo County, where the sun scorches the earth and tradition runs deep in the veins of the Borana people, a new kind of revolution is quietly gaining momentum — one that may finally tip the scales in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV). It is not driven by loud protests or court battles, but by something far more powerful: honest conversations and courageous hearts.

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And she came home to do it.

"It brings me great joy and pride to be with you today, here at home in Isiolo County, where I was born and raised," she told a packed forum of elders, women, youth, and faith leaders. "This forum is not just a meeting. It is a message — that NGEC has heard your voices, and we are here to walk with you."

The campaign, themed Eliminating GBV and Enhancing Access to Justice, marked a significant shift in tone and strategy. Focused on denormalizing domestic violence, dismantling harmful cultural practices, and empowering local structures, the NGEC team chose Isiolo deliberately. This is a county where patriarchal values remain entrenched - where silence has often triumphed over justice, and where suffering has been quietly woven into the fabric of daily life.

But in Isiolo, that silence is now being broken — not by outsiders, but from within. And men are leading the charge.



One on one: NGEC Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa speaks to a Borana elder in Kinna, Isiolo County

Hon. Jaldesa's tactic was disarmingly simple, yet profoundly effective:

Speak to men not as culprits, but as allies. She didn't lecture; she invited. She didn't condemn; she challenged. She addressed the Borana elders with respect and truth, framing the fight against GBV not as a battle against culture, but a battle for dignity, safety, and a future worth believing in.

"Men of Isiolo," she said, "you are the pillars of our families and the guardians of our traditions. We need you to say no to early marriages. No to female circumcision. To protect, not harm. To lead, not silence."

The message landed. One elder stood up and said, "If our Chairperson has come all the way from Nairobi to speak to us like this, not with commands but with care, then we too must do our part." In that moment, a cultural shift — subtle but seismic — took place.

campaign also structured stakeholder dialogues, mobile legal clinics, youth forums, and collaborative forums with religious leaders and chiefs. These weren't just activities - they were a blueprint for sustainable, community-driven change. Survivors of GBV, for the first time in many cases, felt seen and heard. Young girls and boys were educated on their rights. And men - especially the youth - were invited into leadership roles as GBV champions.

This wasn't a token engagement. It a full-circle return. grounding the Commission's message in her identity as a daughter of Isiolo, Hon. Jaldesa breathed new life into what has long felt like a losing battle. "Change does not come from Nairobi," she told gathering. "It starts here. It starts with one man who says, 'I will not allow violence in my home.' One elder who says, 'Our culture will not be used to harm.' One youth who says, 'I want to be part of the solution."

NGEC's approach has always emphasized partnership, data, and dignity. But in Isiolo, it found a new gear: emotional resonance.





» CONTINUATION



NGEC Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa addresses community elders in Kinna, Isiolo County

The stories shared were raw, the wounds still fresh, but for the first time, healing seemed possible — because the healing began in the presence of those who had long held the power to prevent the hurt.

Hon. Jaldesa's words struck a generational chord:

"To my fellow women and girls, your voice matters. Your life matters. Do not be afraid to speak up. You are not alone. This Commission is here to stand with you."

The Isiolo campaign may be one of many NGEC has conducted across the country, but it will be remembered as a turning point. Not just for its scale, but for its soul.

As the Borana proverb goes, "Quibh tok, injiran hin ijesu" — One finger cannot kill lice. It takes all of us. And in Isiolo, for the first time in a long time, all of us are showing up.

This is not just a campaign. It's the beginning of a cultural awakening.

And it began where it always had to - at home.

Justice at the Doorstep: NGEC's Legal Aid Clinics Restore Hope and Resolve Festering Disputes in Isiolo



NGEC Lawyer Nancy Mwangi captures a Kinna resident's story during a legal aid session.

In the sun-scorched plains of Isiolo County, a quiet but transformative revolution in access to justice is underway. The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), wielding its constitutional and recently statutory mandate, brought its mobile legal aid clinic to the heart of this deeply patriarchal region-offering not just legal remedies, but hope, knowledge, and dignity to communities long accustomed to silence and suffering.

This outreach was not just a routine event. It was a practical expression of the Commission's powers under Article 252 of the Constitution and Section 26 of -

the NGEC Act, which enable the institution to summon individuals, compel production of documents, conduct institutional audits on equality compliance, and most crucially—adjudicate, mediate and resolve matters of discrimination and inequality.

At the NGEC's legal aid clinic in Isiolo, justice was not a distant ideal. It was tangible, accessible, and free. Dozens of residents—women, men, youth and the elderly—stepped forward, many for the first time, to seek resolution to deeply personal and often painful disputes. From cases of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), to family wrangles over matrimonial -

property, contested wills, and inheritance claims, the clinic offered immediate support.

A team of NGEC lawyers and certified professional mediators engaged public with empathy and precision. Some disputes were resolved on the spot through alternative dispute resolution (ADR), a method for being known less adversarial, more effective, and faster than traditional litigation. Others, beyond the Commission's jurisdiction, were referred to appropriate agencies such as Commission Administrative Justice (CAJ), illustrating a seamless referral pathway to justice.

The clinic also drew strong support from local religious leadership. The Garbatulla Senior Resident Kadhi offered a compelling endorsement of NGEC's work, describing the forums as critical platforms for both legal and religious awareness.

"Many citizens do not fully understand their rights, or how Islamic law intersects with constitutional provisions on domestic violence and family matters," he noted. "By convening such forums, NGEC is narrowing the knowledge gap and empowering individuals to seek justice."



Garbatulla's Senior Resident Kadhi, Ali Ibrahim, engages the Kinna community in Isiolo County with a powerful message of unity and instice

The Kadhi emphasized that when gender-based violence cases are brought before his court, they are handled with seriousness and sensitivity—ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable in line with both Shariah and national law. Survivors, he affirmed, are assured of redress and support.





SS CONTINUATION

He also lauded the Commission for reinforcing public trust in the justice system. "Accessible and transparent legal processes build confidence in our institutions. This is a cornerstone for upholding the rule of law and improving judicial outcomes," he

The Commission's intervention in Isiolo underscored how alternative dispute resolution-grounded constitutional values, legal expertise, and cultural sensitivity-can restore goodwill and promote community cohesion.

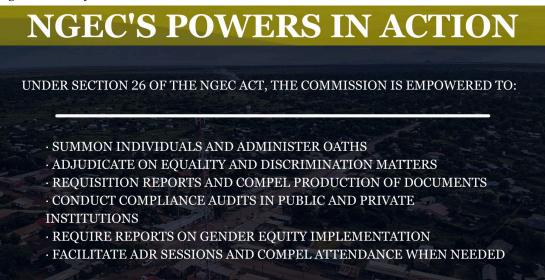
Importantly, these forums are not simply about solving disputes. They are about affirming rights, restoring dignity, and reshaping the narrative around justice for women, men, and marginalized groups.

They empower individuals with knowledge, encourage communities to dialogue, and invite institutionsboth civil religious-to and collaborate in pursuit of fairness and equity.

The Commission's outreach in Isiolo is part of a broader strategy to nonmainstream equality and discrimination across Kenya's counties. providing direct, grassroots-level legal assistance, NGEC is turning policy into practice fulfilling its constitutional obligation to protect and promote the rights of all Kenyans.

And in Isiolo, the results are already visible: communities that once suffered in silence are now speaking out; disputes that lingered for years are being resolved; and public trust in the justice system is rising.

Through its legal aid clinics, the National Gender and Equality Commission is not only bringing justice to the doorstep-it is restoring hope, healing communities, and holding the nation true to its constitutional promise.



Dignity Behind Bars: NGEC Champions Justice, Protection and Healing for Incarcerated Mothers in Isiolo

Commission -especially those society often issues within forgets: incarcerated mothers with serving time their children.

Led by Vice Chairperson Thomas **Koyier** accompanied by Commissioner Mbithuka Nzomo and CEO Dr. Purity Ngina, the Commission's delegation toured the Isiolo Women's Prison, engaging directly with the women behind the prison walls. The visit, supported by Mr. Nahashon Lotaruk, NGEC's Head of Isiolo Regional Office, offered a rare window into the layered realities facing women inmates in Kenya's northern frontier.

In a landmark visit, the They were warmly received by injustice: National Gender and Equality the Officer in Charge, Ms. (NGEC) Lydia Mwangi, who opened the reaffirmed its commitment to gates not only to the prison



Isiolo Women Prison Officer-in-Charge, Lydia Mwangi, offers an insightful briefing to NGEC's Vice Chairperson, Commissioners, accompanying officers during their official visit

Isiolo Women's Prison is home to 35 inmates and 5 minorschildren too young to be separated from their mothers. Yet, the crimes that landed most of these women behind bars, as Ms. Mwangi explained, are rooted in a deeper

the disempowerment of women through survive," Mwangi stated. hailed as timely and meaningful. "GBV tears families apart. no livelihood, no shelter, moved. and children to feed. petty offenses—shoplifting, trespass, loitering."

Her call was clear: GBV is not just a private matter-it is a criminal pipeline. One that leads women from their homes to holding prison.

The Officer in Charge -

chronic decried the lack of basic necessities at the prison. From sanitary pads to bathing soap, the Gender-Based dignity of women behind bars is left to the Violence (GBV). "Many of mercy of well-wishers. In response, the protecting the rights of women facility but to the pressing these women are here Commission donated an assortment because they were forced to personal care items, a gesture Ms. Mwangi

> Once a woman is chased "These donations will not just meet a needaway by her partner, with they will restore dignity," she said, visibly

> survival sometimes leads to However, she made a broader plea: a national policy framework is urgently needed to address the care of minors incarcerated with their mothers, and the reintegration of women postincarceration.

> "Some women prefer staying in prison even after serving their sentence," she revealed, "because outside these walls lies a society cells, and eventually to unwilling to forgive or accept them. We need reintegration policies that work."





>>> CONTINUATION

For the Commission, this visit was not merely symbolic-it was a hands-on mission aligned with its constitutional mandate to safeguard the rights of all, including the marginalized and incarcerated.

"This visit has allowed us to hear unheard," said Chairperson Koyier. mission is not just about equality on paper-it's about restoring dignity where it has been stripped away."

In line with the Commission's growing focus on restorative justice, Dr. Ngina underscored the need for coordinated intersupport, including psychosocial care, access to justice services, and community awareness to stem the tide of GBV and promote rehabilitation.



NGEC CEO Dr. Purity Ngina, with a helping hand from a Kenya Forest Service Forester.

"We must shift our national lens-from punitive to restorative," Dr. Ngina stated. Women in prisons are not criminals—they are survivors of a broken system."

In a symbolic close to the day, the NGEC team, together with staff from the National Drought Management Authority and Kenya Forest Service, participated in a tree-planting exercise within the prison compound.

Each seedling planted became more than a tree -it stood for healing, growth, and a future rooted in equity and protection.

NGEC's visit to Isiolo Women's Prison is part of a larger, strategic effort to ensure no woman is left behind in Kenya's justice system. With increasing focus on prison reform, genderresponsive policies, and the urgent need to address GBV at its roots, the Commission is sending a clear message: justice must be inclusive, compassionate, and transformative.

NGEC Deepens Roots in Isiolo: A Bold Push to Bring Equality Services Closer to Communities

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) made powerful and symbolic stride-one that speaks volumes about its evolving resolve to bring equality and inclusion services closer to Kenya's grassroots.

Led by Chairperson Hon. Rehema and joined Jaldesa, by Vice Chairperson Thomas Commissioners Caroline Lentupuru, Dr. Margaret Karungaru, Mbithuka Nzomo, and CEO Dr. Purity Ngina, the Commission convened for an inaugural sitting at its regional office in Isiolo. This meeting was not ceremonial-it was a boots-on-theground engagement meant to listen, understand, and act.

During the sitting, Commissioners were taken through a candid briefing on the ground realities facing regional offices across the country-challenges marked by logistical understaffing, bottlenecks, and stretched resources.



Chairperson Hon, Rehema Jaldesa, Vice Chairperson Thomas Koyier, Commissioners Caroline Lentupuru Dr. Margaret Karungaru, and Mbithuka Nzomo alongside CEO Dr. Purity Ngina and the dedicated team from NGEC's Isiolo Regional Office, captured in a moment of solidarity and service

Despite hurdles, these Commission lauded the secretariat for their exemplary unmatched commitment and creativity in serving the public. In the words of Chairperson Jaldesa, "They are doing more with less—not because they have to, but because they believe in the transformative power of this Commission."

This direct interface with the field staff underscored the Commission's firm belief in a bottom-up approach to equality: that meaningful impact begins with understanding local dynamics and empowering officers.

NGEC's regional footprint. constitutional mandate. Chairperson Jaldesa Commission to relevant, visible, impactful, present and the underserved.

achieve this, committed to championing delivery. robust resource mobilization targeting the the human, have secure material, support required. effective NGEC or operational tools," she noted,

The visit also served as a adding that grassroots presence rallying call to reinvigorate was central to the Commission's

emphasized that for the While Isiolo was the geographic remain host of this sitting, its symbolism and echoed far and wide. This must be engagement marked a new chapter accessible in how the Commission views, where it matters most- values, and empowers its regional among the marginalized, staff. It also marked a critical shift the underrepresented, and —from a Nairobi-centric operation to a decentralized, communityshe responsive model α f service

campaign, The Isiolo sitting also gave the National Commission a first-hand look at the Treasury and key arms of potential of regional offices when the national government, to properly supported. Officers here innovated by capital partnerships with local NGOs, "An community-based organizations, cannot and local administration to amplify operate in absence of the Commission's impact in the sufficient space, personnel, face of limited budgetary support.





Iranian Embassy Engages in Strategic Dialogue on Education and Women Empowerment

In a landmark diplomatic engagement aimed at fostering inclusive development, the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran has launched a strategic partnership with Kenyan stakeholders to promote education and empower women and marginalised communities across the country.

The strategic dialogue, held at the Commission's headquarters in Nairobi, was chaired by NGEC Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa. It brought together members of the Commission and its Secretariat to deliberate on joint initiatives aligning with Kenya's Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Dr Pourmarjan, widely acknowledged for his dedication to academic advancement, announced renewed support from the Iranian government in the form of expanded scholarship programmes targeting vulnerable Kenyan learners. These initiatives are aimed at improving access to quality education, particularly for those in underserved regions.

"Education is the gateway to opportunity. Through scholarships and structured training, we can uplift communities and create sustainable change," stated Dr Pourmarjan during his address.

According to embassy officials, the scholarship opportunities will prioritise young women and learners from remote counties who face systemic barriers in accessing higher education. The Embassy also expressed interest in facilitating exchange programmes and academic linkages between Kenyan institutions and universities in Iran.



Iran's Cultural Counsellor, Dr Ali Pourmarjan, is presented with a selection of NGEC publications by the Chairperson, Hon Rehema Jaldesa

Further discussions explored the development of tailored training forums for women, with a focus on entrepreneurship, leadership, and vocational skills.

These forums are envisioned as a catalyst for inclusion, offering tools for self-reliance and economic independence. Stakeholders highlighted the alignment of the initiative with Kenya's Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 5 (Gender Equality).

Hon. Jaldesa underscored the importance of partnerships in addressing social inequalities and enhancing capacity among special interest groups.

"Such engagements are not only timely but essential. They speak directly to the heart of inclusive development and affirm the need for global cooperation in addressing local realities," she said.

Participants included gender advocates, educationists, policymakers, and members of civil society, all of whom echoed the need for sustained investment in education and gender equity as fundamental pillars of national development.

This diplomatic dialogue builds on previous cultural and educational collaborations between Kenya and Iran and reflects a growing emphasis on soft diplomacy through people-centred initiatives. Dr Pourmarjan reaffirmed Iran's interest in continuing to support Kenyan communities, noting that cultural diplomacy offers an effective platform for mutual understanding and shared progress.

The engagement signals a new chapter in international collaboration, one that places education and gender empowerment at the forefront of transformative diplomacy.

Partners in Progress: Powering the Push to End GBV

Equality Commission (NGEC), in with partnership the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), convened a high-level Joint Coordination and Review Meeting this week at NGEC's headquarters in Nairobi. The meeting brought representatives from together Nairobi, Machakos, and Kajiado counties, spotlighting multi-sectoral collaboration in the ongoing GBV Elimination Project.

Chaired by NGEC Commissioner Nzomo Mbithuka, standing in for

In a step towards eradicating Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa, the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in gathering served as both a review forum and Kenya, the National Gender and strategic planning session. Commissioner Equality Commission (NGEC), in Mbithuka underscored the urgent need to partnership with the Japan institutionalise GBV prevention measures International Cooperation Agency within county and national development (JICA), convened a high-level Joint frameworks.

The Commissioner called for greater investment in survivor support services and sustained government and community engagement to ensure long-term impact.

JICA's Senior Representative in Kenya, Mr. Fumihiko Suzuki, praised the Commission's commitment and detailed progress made under the joint initiative. Among the major milestones he cited were the successful



he NGEC and JICA delegation pose for a group photograph during the high-level Joint Coordination and Review Meeting

hosting of a business idea contest that encouraged innovative GBV solutions and the anticipated handover of the newly renovated Kajiado County Hospital GBV Recovery Centre in May 2025.

The GBV Elimination Project is set to enter its final phase in the coming months, with counties expected to take the lead in sustaining gains and expanding coverage.





National and County Leadership Unite to Tackle GBV in Isiolo County

High-level engagements between the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) and both national and county leadership in Isiolo County have yielded firm commitments strengthen to efforts in eliminating genderbased violence (GBV) enhancing access to justice for vulnerable populations.

Led by Commission Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa, the NGEC delegation began its campaign activities last week with a strategic courtesy call to Isiolo County Commissioner Geoffrey Omoding. During the meeting, the Chairperson underscored the urgent need to de-normalize domestic violence and dismantle the culture of silence surrounding GBV. Commissioner Omoding pledged the full backing of the national government supporting county-level awareness campaigns and safeguarding the rights of at-risk groups, including women, girls, and persons with disabilities.

In a subsequent engagement at the Isiolo County Headquarters, the delegation was received by Deputy Governor Dr. James Lowasa.

Dr. Lowasa outlined key county government interventions already in place to combat GBV and inequality, including the rollout of Child Protection, Social Protection. and Anti-FGM Policies, alongside initiatives for women's economic empowerment and youth skills development.



nissioner Geofrey Omoding to strengthen collaboration on equality and inclusion

Dr. Lowasa appealed for NGEC's Later, Hon. Jaldesa addressed approaches to eradicate violence technical and policy support in the Isiolo County Stakeholders establishing a Safe House for GBV survivors in Isiolo and drew attention to the gender-differentiated impact of climate change, particularly on pastoralist households, which are increasingly vulnerable displacement, resource conflict, and insecurity.



NGEC Chairperson Hon, Rehema Jaldesa in a candid nent with Isiolo Deputy Governor Dr. James Lowasa during a high-level courtesy call at the Governor's Office, advancing shared commitments to equality and justice

collaboration with the Equality and Inclusion Technical Working Group.

called for the strengthening of inter-agency coordination, improvement of survivor-centered response systems, deeper investment in communitydriven prevention strategies.

County leadership, civil society actors, and justice sector stakeholders present reaffirmed their commitment to coordinated, multisectoral

-especially against women and Forum on GBV Prevention and girls-and to embed gender Access to Justice, convened in equality at the heart of Isiolo's development agenda.



NGEC Chairperson Hon. Rehema Jaldesa addre ournalists outside the Isiolo County Government Headquarters, championing the Commission's call to end gender-based violence.

The campaign forms part of NGEC's broader strategy to deepen subnational partnerships and institutionalize equality and inclusion in Kenya's devolved governance framework

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