


THE LAST STAND



CHELWEK



THE YEAR IS 1954. THE BRITISH HAVE PUT A STATE OF EMERGENCY ON THEIR COLONY KENYA AFTER THE "MAU MAU" UPRISING THAT SOUGHT INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-RULE BY AFRICANS. MUTHONI WA KIRIMA LEADS AN AMBUSH. MUTHONI HAD A DISTRESSING ENCOUNTER AT A SETTLER'S FARM THAT WAS MARKED BY PHYSICAL AND VERBAL VIOLENCE AGAINST KIKUYU MEN, AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST KIKUYU WOMEN. THIS LED HER TO TAKE THE OATH OF THE "MAU MAU" FREEDOM FIGHTERS. SHE ATE SOME EARTH AND SWORE TO FIGHT FOR LAND.

IN THE FIGHT FOR INDEPENDENCE, WOMEN PROVIDED SUPPORT TO FREEDOM FIGHTERS IN THE FORESTS: HIDING THEM, PROVIDING INTELLIGENCE, AND SUPPLIES. MUTHONI IS AMONG OTHER NOTABLE WOMEN LEADERS WHO SACRIFICED THEMSELVES FOR FREEDOM. SHE VOWED NOT TO CUT HER DREADLOCKS UNTIL KENYA RECEIVED "UHURU" - FREEDOM. SHE DID NOT CUT HER HAIR UNTIL 2022.



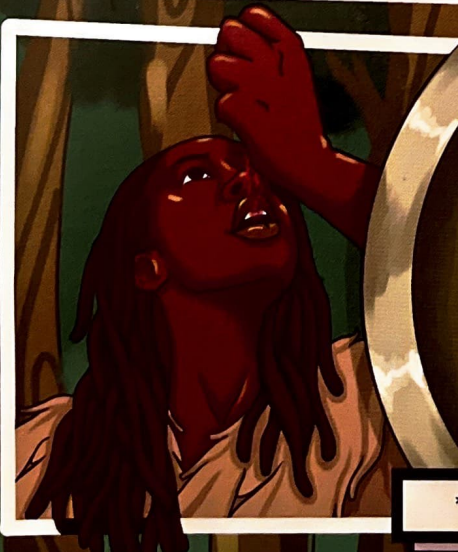
THIS IS OUR LAND THE
SPIRIT OF OUR ANCESTORS
IS OUR STRENGTH!



MZUNGU AKWENDE
ULAYA MWAFRIKA
APATE UHURU*



AAARGH
GOOD HEAVENS!



*THE WHITE MAN TO LEAVE FOR EUROPE, FOR THE AFRICANS TO GAIN THEIR FREEDOM (SWAHILI)

ON FEBRUARY 28, 1992, MOTHERS OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, AGED BETWEEN 60 AND 80 YEARS, PRESENTED A LIST OF 52 POLITICAL PRISONERS TO KENYA'S ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR THEIR RELEASE. THEY THEN PROCEEDED TO UHURU PARK TO PROTEST AND START A HUNGER STRIKE. THE MOTHERS WERE SUPPORTED AND MOBILISED BY ACTIVISTS AND FEMINISTS WANGARI MAATHAI AND NJERI KABEBERI. WANGARI SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF GOVERNMENT FOR THIS REASON, AS SHE WAS SEEN AS MORE VOCAL.

OFFICER HAVE YOU RECEIVED HIS CONFESSION YET?!

SIR, HE HAS REFUSED TO EAT AND SAYS HE IS INNOCENT! HIS MOTHER AND OTHER WOMEN HAVE STARTED A HUNGER STRIKE AT UHURU PARK.

POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE BEING DETAINED WITHOUT TRIAL IN THE PROVINCIAL HEADQUARTERS BUILDING, THE INFAMOUS NYAYO HOUSE. THE PRESIDENT HAS CREATED TORTURE CHAMBERS TO FIND OUT ABOUT THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE CLAMOUR FOR MULTI-PARTY DEMOCRACY. OPPONENTS OF THE PRESIDENT AND HIS GOVERNMENT ASSEMBLED AT UHURU PARK TO CALL FOR THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS WHO WERE BEING SUBJECT TO VIOLENCE AND TORTURE BY THE STATE.

KENYA SHALL ONE DAY BE FREE OF MOI'S RULE! THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY CONTINUES!



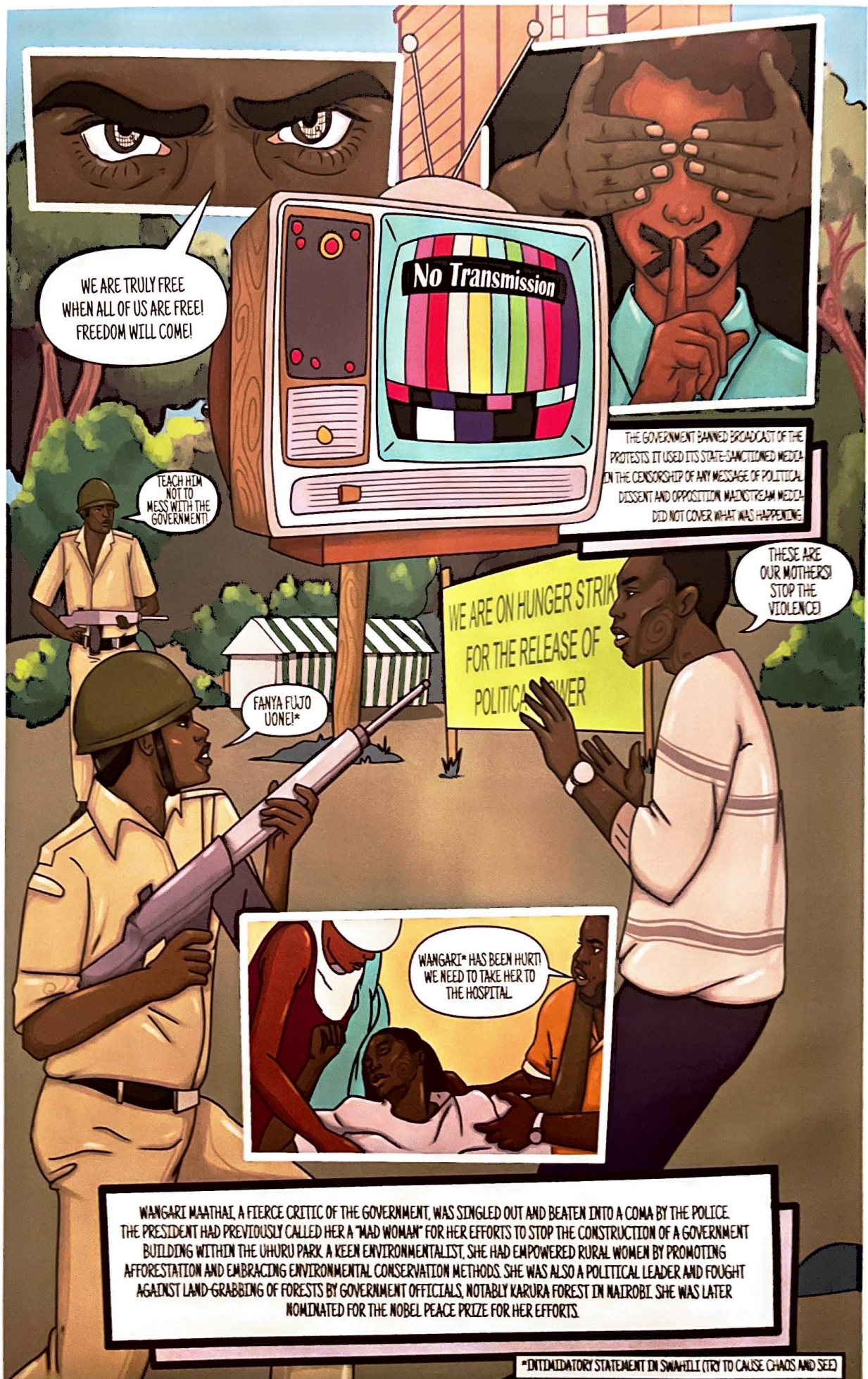
NYAYO

WANGARI MATHAAI, FROM THE GREENBELT MOVEMENT, AND OTHER ACTIVISTS JOINED THE OTHER WOMEN AS THEY CAMPED IN THE PARK DAY AND NIGHT.



UHURU PARK HAS BEEN A RALLYING POINT FOR REFORMS SINCE THE 90'S. THE PARK'S NAME IS SYMBOLICALLY LINKED TO THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE, WHICH FREEDOM FIGHTERS LIKE MUTHONI WA KIRIMA WERE INVOLVED IN.





WE ARE TRULY FREE
WHEN ALL OF US ARE FREE!
FREEDOM WILL COME!

TEACH HIM
NOT TO
MESS WITH THE
GOVERNMENT!

FANYA FUJO
UONE!*

WANGARI* HAS BEEN HURT!
WE NEED TO TAKE HER TO
THE HOSPITAL.


THE GOVERNMENT BANNED BROADCAST OF THE
PROTESTS. IT USED ITS STATE-SANCTIONED MEDIA
IN THE CENSORSHIP OF ANY MESSAGE OF POLITICAL
DISSSENT AND OPPOSITION. MAINSTREAM MEDIA
DID NOT COVER WHAT WAS HAPPENING!

THESE ARE
OUR MOTHERS!
STOP THE
VIOLENCE!

WE ARE ON HUNGER STRIK
FOR THE RELEASE OF
POLITICAL PRISONER

WANGARI MAATHAI, A FIERCE CRITIC OF THE GOVERNMENT, WAS SINGLED OUT AND BEATEN INTO A COMA BY THE POLICE. THE PRESIDENT HAD PREVIOUSLY CALLED HER A "MAD WOMAN" FOR HER EFFORTS TO STOP THE CONSTRUCTION OF A GOVERNMENT BUILDING WITHIN THE UHURU PARK. A KEEN ENVIRONMENTALIST, SHE HAD EMPOWERED RURAL WOMEN BY PROMOTING AFFORESTATION AND EMBRACING ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION METHODS. SHE WAS ALSO A POLITICAL LEADER AND FOUGHT AGAINST LAND-GRABBING OF FORESTS BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, NOTABLY KARURA FOREST IN NAIROBI. SHE WAS LATER NOMINATED FOR THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE FOR HER EFFORTS.

*INTIMIDATORY STATEMENT IN SWAHILI (TRY TO CAUSE CHAOS AND SEE)



WHAT KIND OF GOVERNMENT IS THIS THAT BEATS UP WOMEN?
KILL US THEN! WE SHALL NOT MOVE UNTIL OUR SONS ARE SET FREE!
WE SHALL DIE WITH OUR CHILDREN!

UNBELIEVEABLE!
THESE WOMEN ARE BRAVE! THEY HAVE
SHOWN THE POWER OF WOMEN IN THE FIGHT
FOR DEMOCRACY! LET ME SEE WHETHER THEY
WILL GET MORE SUPPORT FROM KENYANS AND
THE COURT. I SHALL PREPARE TO
DEFEND THEM AND WIN THE CASE!

ON MARCH 3, 1992, THE MOTHERS STRIPPED NAKED. THE KENYAN POLICE COULD NOT BRUTALISE THEM AS IN KENYAN CULTURE, IT WAS CONSIDERED A CURSE TO BE PRESENT WHEN AN ELDER WOMAN REMOVED HER CLOTHING IN PUBLIC. FINALLY, MEDIA COULD NO LONGER SHUN THEM. FOR 11 MONTHS, THEY FOUGHT THIS FIGHT. LEADING POLITICAL ACTIVISTS, INCLUDING LAWYER MARTHA KARUA, TOOK THEIR FIGHT TO THE COURT.



WOMEN IN THIS COUNTRY DO NOT SPEAK AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT! THIS LAWYER IS TRYING TO CHANGE THE SYSTEM!

THE CONSTITUTION DOES NOT ALLOW ANY JUDGEMENT AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT! WHAT DO WE DO?

YES WE HAVE TO AVOID GIVING THE KENYAN PEOPLE THE IDEA THAT THEY HAVE POLITICAL RIGHTS!

RELEASE ALL THE PRISONERS! IT IS AGAINST THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS. IT IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL TO HOLD KENYANS WITHOUT A CASE, AND TO SUBJECT THEM TO UNIMAGINABLE TORTURE!

MARTHA KARUA WAS THE ONLY LAWYER WILLING TO GO TO COURT FOR THE CASE OF THE POLITICAL PRISONERS. EVENTUALLY, ALL PRISONERS WERE RELEASED IN JANUARY 1993 AFTER A COURT RULING.

AFTER 11 MONTHS OF DEFIANCE AND RESISTANCE, THE MOTHERS OF THE POLITICAL PRISONERS SECURED THE FREEDOM OF THEIR SONS. THE VIOLENCE THAT THE MOTHERS ENDURED SPARKED RIOTS AND PROTESTS, AS WELL AS CONDEMNATION FROM THE UNITED STATES AND GERMANY, WHO DIRECTED CRITICISM TO THE MOI GOVERNMENT. EVENTUALLY, MULTI-PARTY DEMOCRACY ENDED MOI'S 24-YEAR DICTATORSHIP.

OUR SONS ARE FINALLY FREE! WE CAN GO HOME!

THE GALLANT HEROINES, INCLUDING THE WIVES AND SISTERS OF THE POLITICAL PRISONERS, SHOWED THE COUNTRY THE COLLECTIVE POWER OF THE FEMINIST RESOLVE TO FIGHT INJUSTICE AGAINST. THEIR DISROBING PROVED THAT THEY WERE PREPARED TO GO AGAINST CULTURAL NORMS IN THEIR FIGHT FOR FREEDOM IN KENYA. THE GROUNDS WHERE THE WOMEN STAGED THE PROTESTS WERE HENCEFORTH KNOWN AS THE "FREEDOM CORNER."

PRESENT DAY NAIROBI. PUBLIC TRANSPORT INCLUDES BUSES AND VANS CALLED "MATATUS". GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN MATATUS IS RAMPANT AND INCIDENTS OF GROPPING, VERBAL ABUSE, PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE OCCUR FREQUENTLY.



BEBA BEBA
TAO MMOJA, BEBA
MREMBO!

HOPE THE MATATU
WON'T TAKE TOO LONG TO FILL
UP TODAY. I DON'T WANT TO BE
LATE TO WORK AGAIN! WAIT,
IS THAT WOMAN CRYING?



YOU'RE LOOKING
SEXY, BABY!

CONDUCTOR!
WHY DID YOU TOUCH ME?
DON'T YOU HAVE ANY SHAME?
YOU ALWAYS DO THIS TO WOMEN
WHEN THEY ENTER THE MATATU!

WOMEN IN MATATUS FACE
UNWANTED ADVANCES, CATCALLS,
AND INDECENT PROPOSALS. SOCIETY
IS GENERALLY UNCONCERNED AND
NORMALISES THE SEXUAL HARASSMENT.
THIS WAS HIGHLIGHTED IN TWO CASES WHERE
ONE WOMAN WAS STRIPPED NAKED AND ANOTHER
RAPED IN MATATUS. DESPITE PUBLIC UPROAR,
SEXUAL HARASSMENT STILL PERSISTS.



WHY IS SHE
COMPLAINING? SHE
IS DRESSED INDECENTLY!
SHE MUST HAVE WANTED
IT! SHE ASKED
FOR IT!

BUT WHY ARE
OUR PEOPLE LIKE
THIS? JUST LET
ME BE!

HAI HAI HAI

MSICHEWI!
THESE YOUNG GIRLS
CAN'T DRESS WELL!

THE ACTIONS OF THE CONDUCTOR AND THE JUDGEMENT OF THE FELLOW COMMUTERS REFLECT THE SOCIETAL INERTIA TO CREATE SAFE SPACES FOR WOMEN IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT. WOMEN FEEL UNSAFE IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND HAVE TO INFORM FRIENDS OR FAMILY OF THEIR ROUTES AND ITINERARIES TO ENSURE THEIR SAFE ARRIVAL. THE PRESSURE TO IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCE FOR WOMEN HAS LED TO INITIATIVES SUCH AS GENDERED TAXI HAILING SERVICES, WHICH HAVE WOMEN DRIVERS. HOWEVER, THESE ARE EXPENSIVE. THE CASE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT FOR WOMEN REMAINS AN ISSUE TO BE ADDRESSED IN A COUNTRY WHERE MOST PEOPLE RELY ON IT FOR MOBILITY.

*CONDUCTOR CALLING OUT FARES IN SWAHILI

GOOD MORNING
NAIROBI!
WELCOME TO THE
BREAKFAST NEWS FROM
NAIROBI FM!
BREAKING NEWS!
A YOUNG GIRL WAS FOUND DEAD
OUTSIDE THE CITY CAMPUS.
THE POLICE ARE LINKING THE
MURDER AND THE RISE OF
FEMICIDE CASES IN
NAIROBI TO...

2019 WAS MARKED BY AN INCREASE IN FEMICIDE CASES
WITH 150 REPORTED DEATHS. MEDIA ATTENTION TO
THESE CASES DID NOT RESULT IN SUBSTANTIVE ACTION
BY THE GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC.

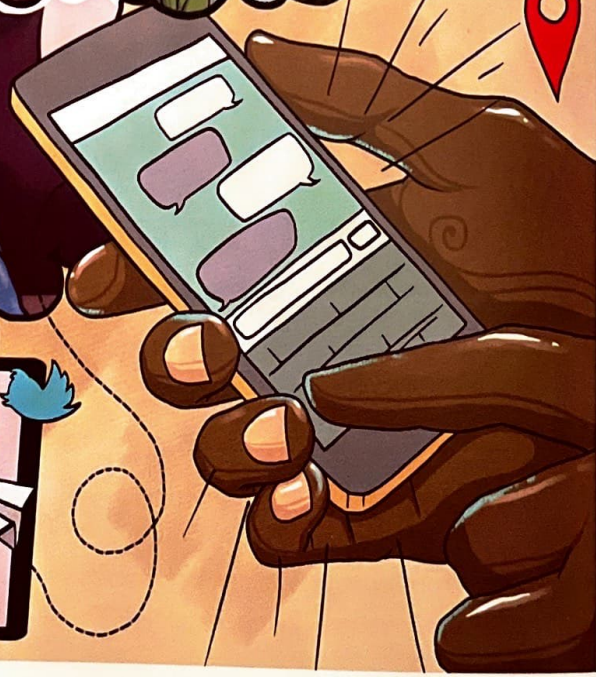
YOUNG WOMEN INSPIRED BY THE
GLOBAL FEMINIST #METOO
MOVEMENT REALISED THEIR
ROLE IN STANDING UP AGAINST
THE RISING CASES OF HUMAN
RIGHTS ABUSES.

HA HA HA!

MSCHEEW

THIS INJUSTICE AGAINST
WOMEN CAN'T GO ON!
I MUST DO SOMETHING
TO STOP THIS!

A NEW GENERATION OF FEMINISTS MOBILISED ON SOCIAL
MEDIA - PLATFORMS THEIR MOTHERS NEVER HAD. THEY DOCUMENTED
AND SHARED THE ABUSES OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS, AND THROUGH
CAMPAIGNS LIKE #MYDRESSMYCHOICE, THEY FOUGHT
BACK SOCIETY.







AHI CHANGE THE STATION!
THESE WOMEN ARE ALWAYS
ON THE NEWS. LET'S LISTEN TO
SOME MUSIC INSTEAD!

IN TODAY'S
NEWS...THE
WOMEN'S
PROTESTS ARE
ONGOING IN
THE PARK

THE PROTESTS WERE
LARGELY IGNORED BY
THE PUBLIC AND MEDIA

YEAH, SHAKE
YOUR BUM BUM

IN FEBRUARY 2020, WOMEN ASSEMBLED AGAIN ON
FREEDOM CORNER WITH A LIST OF 139 WOMEN
AND A BABY WHO HAD BEEN KILLED. THEY
DEMANDED GOVERNMENT RESPONSE. THE
PROTESTS LED TO THE FORMATION OF THE
'FEMINISTS IN KENYA' MOVEMENT AND
'USIKIMYE' (DO NOT BE QUIET) - A SEXUAL
AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE RESCUE
INITIATIVE THAT PROVIDES SAFE HOUSES
FOR SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.

I WISH SOCIETY
WOULD JUST GIVE
US OUR HUMAN RIGHTS
AS WOMEN!

WOMEN DESERVE TO
HAVE THEIR FREEDOMS
PROTECTED.

STOP KILLING US!
PROSECUTE ALL
THOSE WHO KILL
WOMEN!

WILL I EVER BE
SAFE IN A MATATU?

WHAT KIND OF
MUSIC IS THAT?
IT IS DEGRADING
TO WOMEN!

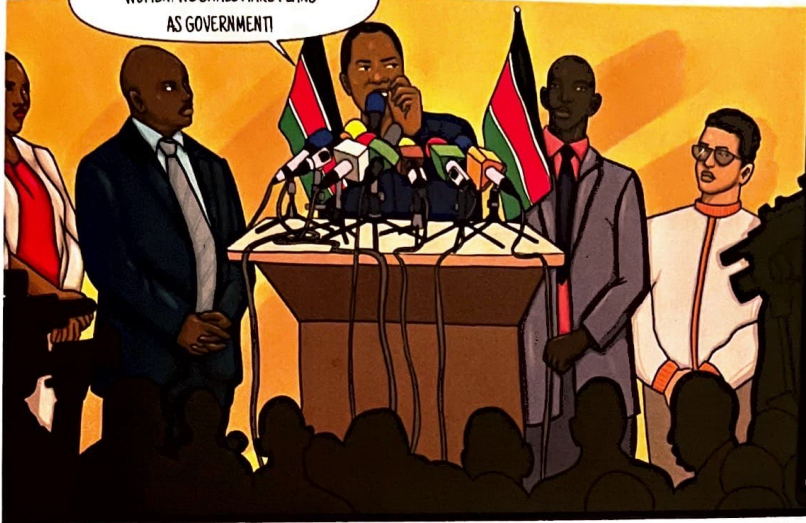
OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS
LEADERS IS TO MAKE SURE THAT THE
DEATHS OF THESE 150 WOMEN
WERE NOT IN VAIN!

PROTEST
AT
FREEDOM
CORNER

SAY
THEIR
NAMES

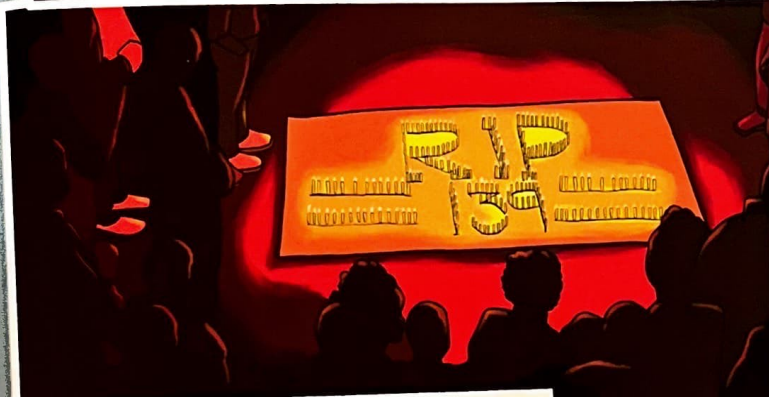
THIRTY YEARS LATER, THE PARK REMAINED THE
PLACE WHERE KENYAN WOMEN GATHERED TO
MAKE THEIR LAST STAND. THE INCLUSION OF
POLITICAL VOICES SERVED TO SHOW THE
STRIDES MADE IN FEMINISM.

AS WOMEN REPRESENTATIVE,
I WILL NOT SIT BACK AND WATCH
THEM PROTESTING.
I AM COMING TO JOIN!




WE HAVE HEARD THE PLIGHT OF
WOMEN! WE SHALL MAKE PLANS
AS GOVERNMENT!


DESPITE THE PROMULGATION OF A NEW
CONSTITUTION THAT PROVIDES THAT THE
GOVERNMENT MUST ENSURE AFFIRMATIVE
ACTION FOR WOMEN IN KENYA, WOMEN
EMPOWERMENT IS STILL A LONG WAY WITH
SOME OF THE PROVISIONS.



THE VIGIL HELD TO COMMEMORATE THE FEMICIDE VICTIMS WAS A
REITERATION OF THE CALL FOR THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND
GIRLS FROM ALL FORMS OF SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.



SAFE SPACES WHERE SURVIVORS UNDERSTAND
THE PROCESS OF ACCESSING JUSTICE AND
RECEIVE COUNSELLING EXIST. THIS RESULTS IN
INCREASED SURVIVOR ENGAGEMENT WITH THE
CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS AND IN DETERRING
PERPETRATORS AND ENDING IMPUNITY AND CYCLES
OF VIOLENCE.



THE PARK IS NOW FENCED UP. IT IS
HIGHLY UNLIKELY IT WILL EVER BE THE
GROUNDS WHERE FEMINISTS ASSEMBLE.
BUT OUR BODIES WERE ALWAYS THE
BATTLEGROUND AND THE CASUALTY, AND
WITH THAT, WE MAKE A LAST STAND.