



**USALAMA REFORMS FORUM (URF)
ANNUAL REPORT TO THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES ON SECURITY AND
HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE (VPI)
Reporting Period: 2025**

Introduction

During the reporting period, Usalama Reforms Forum (URF) continued to advance the promotion of human rights, accountability, and responsible security practices in Kenya and the broader East African region. Guided by the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPs), URF strengthened engagement with civil society, government actors, and private sector stakeholders mainly in extractive and high-risk sectors.

Key achievements included expanded community engagement in resource-rich regions, capacity-building initiatives for security actors, and policy advocacy to align national frameworks with international human rights standards. URF also contributed to multi-stakeholder dialogues in Kenya and in the region of East Africa aimed at improving security governance and preventing human rights abuses. This has been done in partnership with strategic partners like Icofa and Democracy Without Borders. Part of the initiatives has been training civil society members on advocacy and digital reporting on human rights violations. Lately Usalama has been involved in advocacy on violations from mining sites in western Kenya where gold mines are located.

Organizational Commitment to the Voluntary Principles

URF remains committed to the principles of:

- Respect for human rights in security operations
- Promotion of accountability and transparency
- Constructive engagement between communities, companies, and security providers

This commitment is reflected in URF's programming, partnerships, and advocacy efforts, which integrate the Voluntary Principles into project design and implementation.

Governance, Policies, and Systems

Internal Policies

URF maintains internal policies that align with international human rights standards, including:

- Human rights due diligence frameworks
- Safeguarding and protection policies
- Ethical research and data protection and management standards

Risk Assessment and Management

URF conducted periodic risk assessments in project areas, particularly in regions affected by extractive activities and security operations. These assessments focused on:

- Potential human rights risks linked to public and private security actors
- Community grievances and conflict dynamics
- Gender-specific vulnerabilities

Findings informed program design and stakeholder engagement strategies.

Implementation of the Voluntary Principles

Engagement with Communities

URF facilitated community forums and dialogues in affected regions to:

- Raise awareness of human rights and security practices
- Document grievances related to security operations
- Promote peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms

Special attention was given to marginalized groups, including women and youth.

Engagement with Public Security

URF engaged public and private security providers through:

- Training workshops on human rights standards and digital reporting.
- Dialogue platforms between security agencies and communities
- Advocacy for accountability mechanisms and oversight

Engagement with Private Security and Companies

URF collaborated with private sector actors to:

- Promote adherence to the Voluntary Principles
- Provide guidance on human rights due diligence
- Support the development of responsible security policies

Capacity Building and Training

URF conducted training sessions targeting:

- Community leaders and civil society organizations
- Public security personnel
- Private security providers and company representatives

Training topics included:

- Human rights and the rule of law
- Conflict sensitivity and approaches mostly in the extractive sector based mostly on the prevailing situation in western Kenya, and the coast region
- Responsible security management

Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships

URF actively participated in multi-stakeholder platforms, including:

- National and regional policy dialogues
- Civil society coalitions
- Engagements with international partners

These collaborations strengthened collective efforts to implement the Voluntary Principles and share best practices.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenges

- Limited access to some high-risk areas due to security concerns and dilapidated infrastructure like Lambwe valley in Migori county. In Western Kenya
- Resistance to accountability from certain actors with support of Kenyan security agencies
- Resource constraints affecting program scale

Lessons Learned

- Sustained community engagement builds trust and improves outcomes
- Multi-stakeholder collaboration is essential for effective implementation
- Context-specific approaches are necessary to address diverse challenges

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

URF strengthened its monitoring and evaluation systems to:

- Track program impact
- Document human rights trends
- Inform adaptive programming

Feedback from communities and stakeholders was integrated into ongoing initiatives.

Future Priorities

In the coming year, URF aims to:

- Expand programming in extractive and infrastructure sectors
- Strengthen engagement with security providers
- Enhance research and documentation on human rights and security
- Increase advocacy for policy and legislative reforms

Summary

URF remains committed to advancing the Voluntary Principles and promoting responsible security practices that respect human rights. Through continued collaboration and innovation, URF seeks to contribute to safer, more accountable security environments in Kenya and beyond.

Submitted by:

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