

His Excellency Lazarus Amayo, High Commissioner
Kenya High Commission
45 Portland Place, London W1B 1AS

20 July 2016

Dear High Commissioner Amayo,

The Bar Council and Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales are deeply concerned about the recent developments in Kenya concerning the ability of lawyers to freely represent their clients. We were shocked and saddened to learn of the recent disappearance and murder of Kenyan attorney Willie Kimani, his client, Josephat Mwenda, and their driver, Joseph Muiruri, and the circumstances surrounding their deaths.

The UN 1990 Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers affirm that governments are obliged to protect the safety of lawyers and ensure that they are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference. Lawyers play a crucial role in ensuring the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights. When a lawyer is subject to intimidation and violence for representing their client, the client's right to a fair trial is denied and the rule of law is fundamentally threatened.

The Bar Council of England and Wales has the mandate of its 15,500 members to support colleagues in other jurisdictions in the maintenance and implementation of the rule of law. We urge you to do everything within your power to ensure the safety of lawyers in Kenya in discharging their professional duties to their clients.

Chantal-Aimée Doerries QC
Chairman of the Bar of England & Wales

Kirsty Brimelow QC
Chair of the Bar Human Rights Committee of England & Wales