

SPECIAL QUARTERLY ISSUE

AfriNOV

Nonviolence | Evidence | Action

INSIDE

“Not Forgotten”: A 94 year old Grandmother’s Story



Navigating Uncertainty

As we stepped into the second quarter of the year, AfriNov did so with clarity and purpose. With robust work plans at hand and a sharpened focus, our aim was simple but profound: to scale our efforts, reach more communities and deepen the impact of our campaigns for peace, justice and dignity. It was a quarter marked by both meaningful progress and sobering challenges, a season of growth, reflection and renewed resolve.

Kenya's political and social landscape this quarter has been one of tension and transformation. The country witnessed a surge in threats to civil liberties, abductions, extra-judicial killings and growing state hostility toward dissenting voices. Youth, in particular, bore the brunt of this repression. The streets echoed with the grief and anger of the Gen Z movement, young people mourning lost peers, protesting injustice and demanding accountability. What began as peaceful commemorations turned into violent confrontations, marred by infiltration, state retaliation and tragedy.

In response to these uprisings, the government issued harsh directives, including orders like "shoot on the leg" orders, amplifying fear among communities and especially within grassroots organizations and activists. Human rights defenders have been harassed, arrested and in some cases, charged with treason. The cost of civic expression has become dangerously high.

Amidst these storms, there were flickers of institutional progress. After years of delay and court battles, a new seven-member Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission was finally appointed, a necessary step toward restoring public faith in the democratic process. Still, skepticism lingers, especially from opposition voices and the journey toward electoral integrity remains fraught.

In the regions, political sentiments are shifting. While Nyanza once stood as the epicenter of protests, many now express fatigue from the heavy toll of past demonstrations. In contrast, agitation has gained momentum in Central Kenya, where feelings of political exclusion have intensified following the impeachment of a deputy president from the region. The early signs of electoral volatility are already visible, tribal profiling, media censorship, hate speech and police brutality are once again surfacing, threatening the fragile peace.

The political instability is compounded by deepening economic hardship. High inflation, aggressive taxation and widespread unemployment continue to weigh heavily on families. Young people, especially in urban areas, remain idle and increasingly vulnerable to political exploitation. The strain is evident in rising mental health crises, a spike in femicide, gender-based violence and broken family and community ties. The very fabric of society is fraying.

Photo courtesy: cpj, ohchr, Judiciary.



GROUNDING IN COMMUNITY,

Driven by Hope



In these turbulent times, AfriNov remains grounded in its grassroots mission, listening first, responding with care and building with integrity. This quarter, our programs continued to respond to the evolving needs of the communities we serve, centered around three critical pillars:

- **Peacebuilding and Nonviolence**
- **Gender Equality Advocacy**
- **Good Governance**

Our work this quarter recognized the urgency of investing in peacebuilding and civic engagement, especially in light of the rising political tension. The **Turning the Tide** trainings equipped individuals and groups with practical tools for nonviolent action and social change. We supported campaigns that challenged governance failures and addressed gender-based violence, offered trauma healing sessions for widows and women and hosted pre-action meetings to prepare for peaceful mobilizations.

Recognizing the critical role of information and community dialogue, AfriNov launched a local radio partnership, a weekly one-hour talk show connecting our staff and community resource persons directly with citizens. Focused on gender-based violence, this platform has already fostered rich engagement, providing real-time responses to grassroots concerns.

We also welcomed new team members who have strengthened our presence in the field stationed in Nyanza and Western Kenya.

One of the most significant milestones of the quarter was the review of our **Strategic Plan**, a bold step into the future. After the previous plan expired, we initiated a participatory review process, integrating program insights with community realities. With guidance from a competitively recruited consultancy and careful attention to cost-effectiveness, this ongoing process is shaping a dynamic new roadmap for the next five years.

The theme for the next chapter is: **New Horizons**. It signals not just a renewal of our commitment, but a deepening and widening of our work. We envision greater regional influence, from grassroots to national to East Africa-wide reach, responding to calls from across borders for support, collaboration and solidarity.

In the face of repression, AfriNov reaffirms its belief in nonviolence, dialogue and community-led change. In the shadow of economic struggle and political instability, we stand with the vulnerable, the silenced and the hopeful. The path ahead is not easy, but it is necessary, and we do not walk it alone.

Together, with partners, communities and citizens of goodwill, we continue to build a just, peaceful and inclusive society.



SUCCESS

Stories

by

Beatrice Atieno

Regional Coordinator, Nairobi

Greener Life CBO's Youth Employment Campaign in Lucky Summer and Babadogo.

In April 2025, Greener Life CBO, with support from AfriNov, took a bold step to address one of the most urgent and painful realities facing the youth of Lucky Summer and Babadogo, unemployment. In these communities, far too many young people find themselves trapped in cycles of idleness, frustration, and despair. For some, this has led to petty crime; for others, it has meant slipping into the grip of drug and substance abuse. Yet the youth in these neighborhoods are not short of ambition—they are short of opportunities.

To respond to this, AfriNov facilitated a transformative pre-activation workshop in April that brought together 25 unemployed youth, 7 young men and 18 young women, including young mothers. From this workshop, a Youth employment campaign was born. The training gave participants more than just knowledge; it equipped them with strategic skills to plan nonviolent campaigns and the confidence to engage relevant offices and leaders. They were no longer simply job-seekers, they emerged as campaigners for dignity, opportunity and socio-economic justice. The original plan was to hold a peaceful walk to seek employment opportunities from factories within Babadogo and Lucky Summer under the theme, “*Local Youth, Local Jobs: A Campaign for Dignity and Opportunity in Lucky Summer and Babadogo.*”

The walk was meant to make visible the urgent call for meaningful youth engagement. But as the date approached, the country was swept by widespread Gen Z protests, creating safety risks for public gatherings. Rather than abandon their campaign, the group made a strategic pivot. They chose to hold a *Work Stories Circle*, a reflective, safer and more intimate gathering.



Here, the youth came together to share knowledge, celebrate early wins from the April workshop, reflect on their journeys, and inspire hope among those still searching for work.

Among the stories shared were 12 young people who had secured jobs with Climate WarX, an environmental cleanup and waste management company affiliated with the Nairobi River Commission. This remarkable success was made possible through early campaign engagement with the local Chief's Office, which helped open access to these opportunities. Two more participants shared how they had taken a bold leap into entrepreneurship, using the skills and confidence gained during the campaign to launch small businesses of their own.

In the presence of community leaders like the Senior Chief and the Coordinator of Ruaraka Business Community (RUBICOM) the youth asked some necessary questions and to their credit, the leaders didn't deflect. They listened and answered candidly and even made commitments to engage, to follow up and help bridge the gaps that for too long had gone unspoken.

This Work Stories Circle created a rare and precious platform where youth and decision-makers could meet, not across a table, but eye to eye. This initiative reminds us of what's possible when young people are given not just the tools, but the trust to lead.

I may not have papers, but I have skills, I have energy and I have dreams. This campaign reminded me that I still matter. Anastacia, 30, participant and aspiring entrepreneur.



Work stories circle campaign- youths sharing their stories.

"Not Forgotten": A 94 year old Grandmother's Story

In Mumias East, Kakamega County, a story unfolded this year that shook our hearts. AfriNov, through its partnership with Shalom/Amani Community-Based Organization, has long been engaged in grassroots campaigns against gender-based violence (GBV) across Western Kenya. Our approach has been sensitization forums and stakeholder dialogues to nonviolent actions, legal accompaniment, media advocacy, psychosocial support and creative expressions through art and theatre.

Early this year, AfriNov began collaborating with a local vernacular radio station to raise awareness about GBV. Every week, our trained Community Resource Persons (CRPs) hosted talk shows, offering insights, support and answers to a growing listenership across the region. It was after one of these broadcasts that we received a call that would change the course of one woman's life from Kakamega Women's Prison.

A staff member who had been listening to one of the radio sessions asked for intervention for a 94-year-old grandmother, together with her daughter-in-law who had been imprisoned for allegedly trespassing and damaging property on a disputed piece of land. Their crime? Cutting Napier grass. Both women had been sentenced to one year in prison or a fine of Ksh.30,000, an amount they could not afford. Six months into her sentence, the grandmother suffered a devastating fall in prison, dislocating her hip. She was in pain and the prison lacked the resources to fund her treatment. She needed help.

Our CRP, Linet Mwale, visited the prison and after confirming the details, AfriNov mobilized its network. Within a few days funds were raised to take the grandmother to hospital, clear her medical bills and pay the Ksh. 23,000 balance required to secure her release.

by
Trinity Amina

Field Officer, Western/North rift.



Sitting on the right at her home after being released from prison.

AfriNov also reached out to her estranged family to rebuild relationships that had been strained by poverty and dispute. We raised her case in the media, calling attention not only to her injustice, but to the countless others whose stories remain buried behind bars. We initiated dialogue with the neighbors involved in the land conflict to pursue mediation and peaceful coexistence. We began a deeper partnership with the prison itself, holding mental health sessions with both inmates and wardens and joined them in Women's Day celebrations to reaffirm the humanity of those society too often forgets. AfriNov's credibility and reach grew significantly, opening new doors across the region. We formalized collaboration with Kakamega Women's Prison and were granted office space in a national government facility to support our growing GBV work.



The grandmother at the prison just before she was released, on the right is Linet Mwale AfriNov CRP who spearheaded the campaign.



The story was covered on Sunday
Nation April 20th 2025



IMPACT STORIES FROM THE AIRWAVES: HOW RADIO IS DRIVING CHANGE IN WESTERN KENYA

by
Trinity Amina
Field Officer, Western/North rift.

CHILD PROTECTION

After AfriNov introduced the Child Rights talk show, Radio Isebele launched a dedicated weekly program called "Sauti ya Watoto" (The Voice of Children), airing every Saturday. The show provides a safe and empowering space where children express themselves through presentations, poetry, Bible stories and spoken word. To nurture their talents, Amani Group decided to reward the most outstanding participant each week with a book worth Ksh.100. Plans are underway to organize a tournament that will further engage these children, helping them grow with awareness of their rights and the confidence to influence others.

One notable impact came from a teenage girl who, after hearing a broadcast on support for adolescent mothers, attended an AfriNov mentorship session. Inspired and supported, she returned to school and is now mentoring other young mothers herself.

Reports of child abuse have significantly increased but we continue to provide guidance and support to ensure children feel safer and more protected. Parents and community members now understand that defilement cases must not be handled informally or unlawfully and the proper legal process must be followed. Thanks to consistent engagement with the programs fear and local silence around these issues are steadily being replaced with awareness and action.

Many initially admitted on radio that they had feared speaking out about cases of child defilement, believing it was a taboo subject. Today, there is growing awareness of the proper legal channels to follow, all thanks to AfriNov's consistent efforts in creating a platform for education, dialogue and daily community empowerment.

Through the radio program, we've been able to reach and encourage several girls who had dropped out of school due to parental ignorance and cultural bias. As their parents consistently followed our child rights programs, they came to fully understand their responsibility in supporting their children's education, especially that of the girl child, who is often neglected in most of these communities. Some of these girls had been left at home after becoming teenage mothers, but thanks to the awareness created, a number of them have now returned to school.

Through the same radio program, a girl known as Velma was taken back to school by our very own CRP, Linet Mwale.



Velma reporting to school.



Velma with CRP Linet Mwale.



SABINA'S STORY

Sabina's journey began behind the walls of Kakamega Women's Prison, where she found hope through AfriNov's programs promoted on Radio Isebele. Sabina became a symbol of resilience, especially during International Women's Day, where she joined us in celebrating the power of second chances.

Her transformation not only touched fellow inmates but also strengthened our bond with correctional institutions, AfriNov is now officially recognized as a partner by both Kakamega Women's and Men's Prisons.

Her story reminds us that media doesn't just tell stories it can change their endings.

MAMA ROSE: RECLAIMING WHAT WAS HERS

After the loss of her husband, Mama Rose faced the injustice too many widows do which is denial of inheritance. But everything changed when she tuned in to a segment on women's inheritance rights.

With AfriNov's legal support, she pursued her rightful claim and won her case. Today, she cultivates that land to support her children's education. This is a victory not just for her, but for every woman told to stay silent.



A lady engaging one of our CRPs after a GBV training.

BABA PATO: DIALOGUE OVER DIVISION

Even men are joining the cause. After listening to our broadcast, Baba Pato invited his siblings to resolve a long-standing land dispute amicably. As of today, the family land is under equal distribution and proper succession process. This is a testament to the healing power of knowledge and communication.

WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS

Our discussions on women's land rights have sparked real movement. Widow groups and women's cooperatives are now requesting training from AfriNov on title deeds, succession law and land documentation.

These are marks of a cultural shift from silence to self-advocacy.

RODA OYIENDA VS. STEPSON: LAND DISPUTE SINCE 1987

For nearly four decades, Roda Oyienda has been locked in a painful land dispute with her stepson, a conflict that has robbed her of peace and stability. After hearing Mama Mary speak on Radio Isebele about land rights and property ownership, she was moved to take action. With AfriNov's guidance, her case was referred for mediation. For the first time in years, there is hope of resolution and healing for her family. We stand in solidarity with Roda as she prepares to seek justice through dialogue, not division.

The Journey Continues...

Kenya's political landscape remains volatile. The 2027 election cycle has begun early, complete with warning signs of potential violence. Youth unemployment persists, gender-based violence continues and economic pressures mount.

Yet the second quarter's work reveals something powerful about human resilience. Communities refuse to be passive victims of circumstances beyond their control and it is not in the dramatic transformation that captures headlines, but the patient work of building just societies.

AfriNov's role in this transformation is neither to lead nor to impose solutions, but to provide tools, training and support that amplify communities' own wisdom and determination.

As Kenya moves toward another election cycle, these grassroots foundations of democracy become increasingly vital. Communities trained in nonviolent action, equipped with conflict transformation skills, and connected through networks of solidarity represent the country's best hope for peaceful transition and sustainable development.

The work continues, one campaign at a time, one training at a time, one transformed life at a time. In a world often consumed by spectacle and crisis, AfriNov and its partners demonstrate the enduring power of patient, strategic, nonviolent action to create the change they seek to see.

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For more information about supporting this work,

Visit www.afrinov.org

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