

**Remarks by Wevyn Muganda**  
**Security Council Briefing on Youth, Peace and Security**  
**17 July 2019, 3pm**  
***[As prepared for delivery]***

Excellencies, distinguished delegates and fellow young people,

*[All protocol observed]*

My name is Wevyn Muganda. I am a 25-year-old activist working at HAKI Africa, a national human rights organization based in Mombasa, Kenya.

It is an honor to brief the Security Council today, and I commend the Presidency and other Member States for prioritizing youth, peace and security and inviting young briefers to this meeting.

Young people are agents of change. Revolutions of today are led by young men and women like me who have put themselves at the frontlines to ensure that we live in a more peaceful, just and inclusive society. We acknowledge the urgency in taking charge of our future.

This is why UNSCR 2250 and 2419 on youth, peace and security - if fully implemented - have the power to transform the lives of young people and societies.

HAKI Africa- has engaged thousands of young people on human rights and peacebuilding efforts through:

- Human rights education,
- Youth-led social activities with justice actors,
- Youth reintegration in communities,
- Support to the formulation and implementation of legislative and policy frameworks, such as the Mombasa County Action Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism in partnership with communities including young people, the National Government and the County Government of Mombasa

There can be no peace without justice, which is why in the quest for transitional justice, we partnered with the Office of Director of Public Prosecutions in Kenya, to conduct public enquiries on the extrajudicial killing cases of 136 people at the Coast of Kenya that took place from 2012 to date, with most victims being young people.

The seminal Progress Study on Youth Peace and Security, the 'Missing Peace', presented in this Chamber last year, rightly identifies injustices and lack of human rights as a key contributor to the violence of exclusion. So often, young people are seen as just victims or perpetrators, rather than as citizens and key partners for peace.

Our biggest challenge lies not just in rehabilitating young people, but also in partnering with the majority of young people -whom, as we know, are not interested in violence.

This should be done by fostering a conducive environment that allows for meaningful participation in decision-making. It also means supporting young people to become and make a difference as peacebuilders themselves and through their organizations, movements and networks.

I spend my Sunday afternoons with young people in our “chill spots”. In Mombasa, we call them ‘*Maskani*’ to refer to informal spaces where young people gather during their free time. Research has shown that the police has been accused of going to these spaces to harass, illegally arrest and in some instances solicit for bribes from young people. These are also spaces which extremist groups can use to recruit some young people. But more importantly, it is also in these spaces that HAKI Africa has identified the most powerful young influencers and activists. We have invited many young women and men to participate in trainings on human rights, peacebuilding and leadership and they have become peacebuilders leading local initiatives for example on community policing. To reach the most vulnerable and marginalized, we must go to the places where young people are, spend their time and move away from town halls, formal workshops etc.

I love the internet. The internet is where I socialize, learn and get entertained. It is also where I publish youth-friendly articles on human rights, social cohesion and active citizenship, including alternative narratives to violent extremism through my blog ‘Beyond The Lines’ and accessible pieces on national and local instruments such as Kenya’s Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism. To date, it has reached over 110,000 young people. and helped build an online community of peacebuilders and active citizens.

‘*Kauli Zetu Mtaani*,’ a Swahili phrase for ‘Our opinions in the hood’ is also a personal initiative that I started this year to amplify the excluded voices of young people, through filming the debates and conversations in ‘*Maskanis*’ on social issues and sharing them online.

I believe that every voice should be heard. Every voice counts.

My experience is one of many young human rights defenders and peacebuilders working locally. As part of UNDP Youth ‘16x16 initiative’, I have joined a group of impressive young activists from around the world who lead organisations, movements and networks contributing to advancing SDG16 -peaceful, just and inclusive societies. We have received incredible support and have had opportunities to engage meaningfully with a range of partners, locally and internationally. We need more initiatives like these, which can truly strengthen youth agency.

Whilst progress has been made to implement the Youth Peace and Security agenda, we still have to create an enabling environment for peacebuilding and to ensure that young people can truly be in the driving seat of peace and security.

I urge Member States to fully implement UNSCR 2250 and 2419. In my view, the three key steps that should be taken are:

- First, enhancing the participation of young people in decision making processes at all levels, including by listening to voices of local actors;
- Second, protecting the human rights of all individuals, with particular focus on youth, especially young women and sexual minorities, human rights defenders and peacebuilders.
- Last but not least, ensuring greater accountability and regular reporting in the Security Council on how well it is doing with and on youth.

UN Security Council Resolution 2250 has secured me and my young peers a seat in the car. We are deeply excited about the journey, and that is why we need to be in the driver or co-driver’s seat to reach our destination. We want to take charge. We want to drive forward. Will you lead with us? Thank you.