



The International Community of Women Living with HIV

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ICW CELEBRATES WORLD AIDS DAY, 2014 IN KENYA:

A CALL TO END FORCED AND COERCED STERILIZATION

Nairobi, Kenya 1st December, 2014 – The International community of Women Living with HIV (ICW) joins celebrants during the commemoration of ‘World AIDS Day (WAD)’ 2014, to be held at the Kenyatta Stadium, Machakos County in Kenya. The theme this year is: ‘*Getting to Zero*’ and the Machakos County Commissioner will flag off the WAD processions.

ICW calls upon all partners and stakeholders in Kenya and across the world to stand up to end *Forced and Coerced Sterilization* of women living with HIV.

ICW Global Office, in partnership with ICW Kenya, will be highlighting gains made in the areas of gender, human rights and HIV and calling attention to human rights abuses still faced by women living with HIV—particularly forced and coerced sterilization. The forced and coerced sterilization of women living with HIV is a serious violation of women’s fundamental human rights to bodily integrity, informed consent and to make our own reproductive choices. Sterilization without informed consent or under coercion is a widespread form of institutionalized violence against women and is part of a systemic pattern of violations of sexual and reproductive rights experienced globally by women living with HIV.

"Women living with HIV continue being forced and coerced into sterilization without consideration to their sexual and reproductive health choices," said Ms. Inviolata Mmbwavi, ICW Kenya's Coordinator.

Forced or coerced sterilizations have been reported and documented by ICW and others in Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, Chile, China, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Fiji, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Philippines, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam and Zambia. The widespread nature of this practice demands a strong and coordinated response at the national, regional and global levels.

Acknowledging Kenya’s leadership on this issue as critical for the region, ICW urges the First Lady of Kenya, Lady Margaret Kenyatta, on this World AIDS Day to call on All Kenyans and leaders around the world to uphold the human rights of women and girls living with HIV and commit to ending the practice of forced and coerced sterilization of women living with HIV.

ICW supports the First Lady and her beyond zero campaign and hopes this campaign will include championing of the human rights of Women Living with HIV especially on this issue of forced and coerced sterilization. Lady Margaret is a powerful ally and champion of many women's issues and has attracted enormous attention and interest. We now look forward to supporting actions that will respect and protect the human rights of women living with HIV as we move toward a new global agenda

"As a Kenyan, I believe that we need to step up and do justice to the women who have experienced this type of systemic injustice. Forced and coerced sterilization is an act of violence; and act of torture," said Teresia Njoki Otieno, ICW Global chair.

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