



INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL of KENYA

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PREPARE FOR KENYA'S 2017 GENERAL ELECTIONS

PRESS STATEMENT

Preamble

We the religious leaders have met under the Kenya Inter Faith Elections Programme (KIEP), an initiative of the Inter Religious Council of Kenya, to reflect on the state of our nation and especially focusing on the upcoming General Elections. Appreciating that Kenya is a multi party democratic state, and that elections are an important factor in determining the stability of the nation, we reiterate that the 2017 General Elections must be free, fair, peaceful and credible. As faith leaders, we have been following the prevailing political activity and especially early campaigns, and are concerned that this trend portends ill for our nation. We therefore wish to share the following messages:

1. Message to the IEBC

As the constitutionally mandated institution to manage elections in Kenya, the Independent Elections and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) bears primary responsibility for ensuring that the 2017 General Elections are free, fair, peaceful and credible. For this to be achieved, the Commission must commit to operate transparently and be accountable to Kenyans. Any shortcomings in the elections are in essence a failure on the Commission to implement its mandate. It is in this regard that we call upon the IEBC to address the following issues among others:

a) Register of Voters

We the faith leaders take note of the fact that to date, the IEBC has not clarified specifically what it holds as the Principal Voters Register. This is a matter of key concern since during the 2013 General Elections and the subsequent by elections, there have been cases of voters whose names and details were found in the Electronic Voter Identification Devices (EVID) but were not in the manual register and vice versa. The lack of clarity on the voters register has led to cases of voters' disenfranchisement and this duplicity opens the door for contestation of the results. We call upon the IEBC to publicly clarify which is the Principal Voters Register and make it public. We further recommend that the Commission creates a platform for voters to verify their registration status using mobile technology.

b) Electronic Devices Used in Elections

In the period leading to the 2013 elections, the IEBC acquired Biometric Voter Registration (BVR), Electronic Voter Identification Devices (EVIDs), Electronic Results Transmission System (ERTS) and the Optical Mark Readers (OMRs) with a promise to Kenyans that these would ensure efficiency and accountability in the elections. The devices failed miserably. It is also notable that in the by-elections held since then, there have been reported cases of some of these devices failing to function. We therefore call upon the IEBC to inform Kenyans the measures they have taken to ensure that all the electronic devices required for the 2017 General Elections will function as they should. This is a key concern for Kenyans in view of the Public Accounts Committee reports that detail corruption and shenanigans previous procurement exercises. In addition, there should be an agreed upon fall back system should the electronic devices fail to function.

c) Enforcement of Election Laws

The greatest hindrance to free, fair, peaceful and credible elections in Kenya has always been the failure by electoral management bodies to enforce the electoral laws, a trend that has been perfected by the IEBC's refusal to implement to provisions of the Elections Act 2011. This has resulted in the situation where some people behave as though they are untouchable sacred cows that can commit any manner of elections offences without any repercussions. We wish to inform the IEBC commissioners and staff that their day of emancipation from political patronage will be the day they bar errant individuals from participating in elections. Then, and only then, will Kenyans start taking them seriously.

On its part, we call upon the National Assembly to speedily pass the Elections (Amendment) Bill 2015 so as to safeguard the credibility of future elections. It is nonetheless important that these amendments should not be used to water down the safeguards already in place.

d) Cost Effectiveness

The faith leaders and indeed all Kenyans continue to follow with amazement the constant requests for more funds by the IEBC, the latest being the assertion that the 2017 General Elections will cost KShs 45 billion. These requests are puzzling, especially considering that the publicly available information indicates that IEBC operations are very high. We take note of the reports that the IEBC was advanced more than KShs 560 million to undertake the recent voter registration exercise which reached only 1.4 million voters. This means that it cost KShs 400 to register a single voter. We urge the Commission to come out and explain these costs. This trend carries forward the previous one where in 2013, it was summarised that it cost KShs 2,900 for each ballot cost, which is extremely high compared to countries like Ghana whose elections cost KShs 1,000 per ballot cast.

e) Concern About the IEBC

We the faith leaders have keenly observed the recent events that have demonstrated shortcomings in the capacity of the IEBC to handle various electoral responsibilities. These, alongside the issue of the term of the current leadership, must be candidly addressed. This is especially so since their term will expire soon after the 2017 General Elections. To this end, we would urge Kenyans to soberly address these issues, and we as religious leaders are willing to participate in the process and possible lead it.

2. Message to the Police

We the faith leaders appreciate that the enforcement of law and order is the responsibility of the Kenya Police Service and other security agencies. We urge all our security officers to purpose to ensure the security and integrity of the 2017 General Elections by ensuring that any and all persons who break the law are dealt with immediately. In addition, we urge that you ensure to undertake comprehensive investigations so that the arrested persons are successfully prosecuted. We recognize that corruption, both in general life and specifically in elections, will be fully eradicated the day our security agents will take the bold step of resisting bribes and handling all cases as per the constitution and the laws of Kenya.

3. Message to the Director of Public Prosecutions

We the faith leaders continue to be amazed by the manner in which cases of hate speech and other contraventions of the law are dismissed due to poor presentation in court by the prosecution. We call upon the Director of Public Prosecutions to recognize that his office is directly responsible for the continued failure by the country to punish crime. It is our counsel that you purpose to successfully prosecute every person who commits a crime as related to the 2017 General Elections.

4. Message to the Judiciary

We the faith leaders have followed with growing concern the drama surrounding the retirement of Judges especially those serving at the Supreme Court of Kenya. We appreciate the media

reports that the Chief Justice Dr Willy Mutunga will retire one year earlier than his constitutional obligation so as to ensure smooth transition before the 2017 General Elections. We urge the other judges of the Supreme Court of Kenya to reflect on the impact of their actions and as patriotic Kenyans and act in the interests of the country.

Further, we call upon the judges and magistrates to resist the pressure by political actors to delay delivery of justice by using technicalities and bribes. It will be a great day for this nation when judges decide to jail every person who tries to bribe them or the other court officials. Barring this, the credibility of the Judiciary continues to be depleted by cases of corruption among judges and therefore the country will not have an independent arbiter for election petitions in 2017.

5. Message to Politicians

It is a reality that faith communities are present at every village and location in this country. As such, we are in constant touch with what is happening on the ground, and we are now concerned by the trend that current wave of politicking is taking. We therefore urge all politicians and their vested interests to cease making elections a matter of life and death for Kenyans. It is immoral and sinful for anyone who is seeking a position to casually posit that Kenyans can die and be maimed just so that they achieve your political ambitions. We are especially disgusted that politicians and aspirants at different levels are creating militias whose sole intent is to visit violence on Kenyans. This must be stopped forthwith.

We advise you to uphold value-based campaigns and policies and you will prosper. We especially urge you to begin preaching and practicing peace rather than creating structures for violence.

6. Message to the President

Recognizing that the IEBC has set the date of the General Elections as 8th August 2017, and that this requires Parliament to be dissolved in early May, the standing budget cycle will be greatly affected. We therefore urge His Excellency the President to spearhead consultations with Parliament as well as partners in the East African Community to facilitate an agreement on the amendment of the cycle so that the country does not have a financial crisis.

7. Message to Kenyans

Our dear brothers and sisters, citizens of Kenya, we wish to remind you of the great power you hold as the people of Kenya. The Constitution of Kenya 2010 vests all sovereign power in you. Do not allow any person to deceive you that power belongs to them, for they can only hold power if you give it to them. We are fully aware that the social media is awash with messages aimed at stoking ethnic prejudices and balkanization. It is our sorrow that the conventional media is following the same trend by providing space and airtime for elites to propagate the same hate messages. We counsel you that the best security against those who are hell-bent on destroying our national cohesion is to speak out against those messages and reject the leaders who espouse the same.

Similarly, let us purpose to reject all those who have engaged in corruption and other social evils. We can clean up our nation by simply choosing a different caliber of leaders. This is our chance to make the nation we have always wanted.

Further, we urge you to take responsibility for our nation and take every opportunity to participate in the governance of the country. A first step in this direction is ensuring that you register as a voter and exercise the right to vote when the time comes.

We especially urge all our youth to refuse to be used by political actors to cause violence and chaos in the country. Remember that every person who uses you does not value you and instead considers you worthless pawns to be sacrificed so that they get wealth and

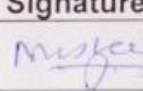
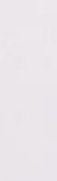



prominence while you remain in poverty. The money they will give you will not be worth anything when law and order breaks down.

8. Conclusion

Elections play a key role in our nation. It is therefore important that we don't allow any person or institution to bungle the 2017 General Elections since that will have the potential to plunge the country into chaos as was witnessed in 2007. As faith leaders, we pledge our commitment to engage the electoral process with a goal of promoting the inculcation of national values, cohesion and public participation in the political processes and ensuring that the 2017 General Elections will be free, fair, peaceful and credible.

May God bless Kenya.

Signed on this 31st day of March 2016 at OI Lerai, Jumua Place, Nairobi, for and on behalf of the Kenya Inter Faith Elections Programme:

Faith Community (RCB)	Name	Signature
Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK)	CONNIE KIVUTI	
Hindu Council of Kenya		
Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB)	Hilfred Othman	
National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK)	Rev Canon Peter Karanja	
National Muslim Leaders Forum (NAMLEF)		
Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC Kenya)	Rev. Fr. Joseph Mutie	
Seventh Day Adventist Church	DR. SAMUEL MAKORI	
Shia Ithnasharia Muslim Association (SHIA)		
Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM)	Prof Abdulghafur El-Bursaidy	