

KENYA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS



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PEACEFUL AND CREDIBLE ELECTIONS ... LEADERS OF INTEGRITY

PREAMBLE

We the Catholic Bishops in Kenya, meeting during our Ordinary Bishops' Plenary Assembly at St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary, Nairobi, wish to convey our Easter greetings to all Kenyans, our Catholic faithful and all people of good will. We greet you with the words of our risen Lord Jesus Christ: ***"Peace be with you!"*** (Jn 20:21)

Since the Launch of our Lenten Campaign in February this year, we have been praying for Credible and Peaceful Elections as we prepare this year's General Elections. We have also been praying that the leaders we shall elect will be men and women of integrity; God given leaders untainted by corruption, untouched by the greed for money, who don't promote negative ethnicity, peaceful leaders who don't hate others, who don't give hate speeches and are true leaders who have the interest of this country at heart.

Unfortunately, what we are seeing now when the political parties are nominating those who are going to contest for the various elective seats is worrying and is a clear indication that we could be heading towards the wrong direction and not the ways of peace for which we have been praying. It is very important, therefore, that all peace loving Kenyans pay attention to this situation and address it as a matter of urgency and concern.

POLITICAL PARTIES PRIMARIES

As stated above, we are meeting at a time when the political parties are engaged in nominating those who will vie for the various political seats in the General Elections. We have been following with keen interest the ongoing party primaries' nominations. If the violence, the allegations of bribery, suspicions, accusations and counter accusations, rejection of nomination results and the general acrimony we are being treated to are anything to go by, then all of us have reason to be very worried over the forth coming August General Elections. The party primaries have turned out to be emotive and have generated tension that has spiraled into violence in some areas.

The inability by most of these political parties to conduct clean and transparent elections as well as the mistrust that has been generated among politicians even of the same party leaves a lot to be desired. What is clear is that the parties we have in Kenya are not yet capable of handling organized and peaceful processes of an internal democracy. The chaotic situations we are seeing demonstrate how fragile the political system that we have in Kenya is at the moment. It is a system that is open to manipulation and abuse by characters with no integrity and who are not mature enough to discern between what is good and evil. Such people should not have been allowed to present themselves for elective positions in the first place.

We pray that the chaotic manner in which these nominations have been conducted will not be a mirror of what will happen in the General Elections. It has not escaped our attention that recent surveys are predicting possible scenarios foreseen as we head for the General Election in August.

The fear of widespread violence erupting cannot be ignored. We are already witnessing that communities are beginning to be suspicious of one another; investors are wary of investing in Kenya, foreign tourists and other visitors are cancelling their visits to the Country due to security uncertainties, lenders employ a wait and see attitude,

and the general economy of the Country has stalled. This is not good for our Country.

Many Kenyans seem to have lost confidence in the capacity of institutions, bodies, individuals and even in their own leaders. That is why we hear aspirants threatening, intimidating opponents, declaring themselves winners, never accepting loss, burning of ballot papers and whipping up public emotions to violence. This is setting a clear stage for loss of confidence in those institutions entrusted with the responsibility of steering the electoral process, and therefore preparing for electoral violence and chaos. It is important that Kenyans learn to trust and give a chance to those concerned to do their work. Should there be any issue, the way of dialogue and the use of the established Courts should be employed. We must not take the matter into our own hands. We must learn to trust and talk to each other. There is hope for a brighter future for our Country and we must remain hopeful.

A LESSON FOR IEBC

Let these nominations be lessons to be learned so as to avoid the glaring pitfalls that have been witnessed. We call upon IEBC to do a better job in planning and in the execution of the forthcoming elections. Free, fair, transparent elections will result in peaceful elections that will be acceptable to all. We will avoid having contested elections results as we witnessed in the 2007-2008 when our Country almost disintegrated.

Similarly IEBC should be firm and unequivocal in dealing with any malpractice and any individual who does not follow the law should immediately be disqualified from taking part in the elections. There is need to demonstrate that Kenya has grown in democracy. Let us bring to an end this circus of election violence and chaos that engulfs the Nation soon before and after every election. The law enforcement

agencies must not give room to lawlessness. Nobody must be left to think he or she is above the law.

NO TO BRIBERY

We must reject those politicians who are going round dishing out money so that they can be voted in. We must never accommodate the culture of handouts as a normal way of life and the way of electing leaders. Good and proper leadership is a gift from God that can never be bought. Bribery is evil, it is wrong, no matter who gives it or receives it..... *"for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous"* **Ex. 23:8**

Before being tempted to accept money from a politician take time and ask yourself, where is this money coming from? Where do the millions of shillings being splashed around by most of those campaigning for political positions come from? And where do they get the money that they are using to bribe voters right and left in the presence of all, including the law enforcement agents?

Our dear Kenyans, if we allow corrupt people to be our leaders then we have no right to complain if all the national resources are looted and channeled into the bank accounts of very few, while millions of our people are wallowing in poverty. We want to state clearly that the greed that we are seeing, the lust for power and the uncaring attitude and arrogance that is displayed by those who have access and control our patrimony, be it at the national or county level, will be our undoing as Kenyans.

Consequently, let us not touch their money when they come to bribe us to vote for them. We must not accept a bribe and we must do away with the notion that we can "eat" from such politicians but vote for those we want. This is not the way to fight corruption; we must not let ourselves be contaminated at all for it is only when we ourselves have clean hands that we can vote for clean leaders whom

we know to be men and women of honesty. Integrity has to begin from us, if we want our nation to be the Kenya we want, where all people have equal opportunities and where the national cake is shared equally.

INSECURITY

We your shepherds and all people of goodwill are deeply disturbed by the situation of insecurity in several parts of our Country, particularly in Baringo, Kerio Valley, parts of the Coast, Laikipia, parts of Marsabit and Turkana.

The conflict between conservationists and herders in some parts of Laikipia that has ended in loss of lives is very disturbing. When a state of lawlessness is allowed to prevail for a long time then it becomes difficult to restore order. Let the government act severely when the situation requires it in order to stem out acts of banditry and state of anarchy that is taking root in this part of the Country. That such attacks are now sustained during an election period seems to give an impression that they are politically instigated. Apparently no significant arrests have been made despite the heavy presence of police and military in the affected areas.

As we recognize the efforts being employed by the government to contain the situation, we are, however, convinced that a lasting solution should be invested not in the force of arms, but development projects and equitable distribution of social services in all parts of the country. The government should be firm and decisive in dealing with politicians who are alleged to be involved in the attacks. Dear Kenyans, we earnestly urge you not to think that problems are solved by attacking others or causing violence.

CONCERN FOR THE YOUTH

Our young people are the treasure of this nation. We cannot afford to lead them to destructive tendencies and a culture of corruption. We must never use our young people to kill, maim and cause violence. It is morally evil for anybody to take advantage of vulnerable young people, to promote his or her own political ambitions. During this period of heightened political campaigns we wish to caution aspirants against using young people to cause violence and engage in reckless lifestyles. We must never allow our youths to be intoxicated with illicit brews and drugs to cause violence in the name of youth empowerment.

We exhort young people to uphold their dignity, defend their rights and participate fully in shaping the country we want.

DROUGHT AND FAMINE

The prolonged drought that is ravaging many parts of our country is causing untold suffering to so many people. It is estimated that the pastoralist communities have lost 60% of their livestock to the drought. With their livelihood gone, these Kenyans are experiencing the scourge of famine that unless mitigated urgently might lead to loss of many lives. Therefore, we urge the County and National Governments to work together in harmony to ensure food security.

Whereas many people, especially in dry areas continue to experience a worsening situation of drought, it is evident that all attention has been diverted to politics with considerable resources being used in campaigns and roadshows. It is unfortunate that the same leaders who are supposed to engage in drought management activities, are the same ones misusing the little available resources and bribing voters. This culture of greed and self-centeredness is worsening an

already bad situation. Suffering Kenyans are being pushed to the brink of despair.

We appreciate the fact that the Government heeded our call to declare drought a national disaster and therefore to appeal for relief emergencies to affected areas. The Catholic Church, through Caritas Kenya, has mobilized dioceses, groups, parishes and individuals of good will to assist our needy brothers and sisters. We wish to express our deep gratitude to all our people who responded to this cry, and would encourage this to continue as long as the situation of the drought lasts.

As your shepherds, we assure all those affected and devastated by drought and famine that the Church stands with you. We appeal to all our Christians and people of goodwill not to get tired of helping those who are in need. We don't expect to have a peaceful situation when the majority of the people are hungry and are struggling to survive.

INTERPRETATION OF THE LAW

While every person has a right to present his or her petition to the Courts, it should be understood that only those with merit should be accepted and determined by the Courts. The common good of the Country and the administration of justice and truth have to be the guiding principles when applying the Law.

There is concern that most of the Laws applied are being challenged in Court and thereby hampering any progress. Apparently Laws enacted in parliament and gazette notices being given are not sufficiently precise. There is not yet any legislative interpretation of the new constitution or jurisprudence that guides administrators and Lawyers in correctly interpreting and applying the Law. We call upon the Judiciary and Law Society and any legal institution to help

develop a credible body of interpretative jurisprudence to guide the executive and all other agencies apply the Law in the correct way.

GOOD LEADERS TO VOTE FOR

1. God fearing, morally upright and respects rights of others;
2. Committed to promoting human dignity and solidarity among people;
3. Leaders who live and practice human, ethical and family values.
4. Promote respect of law and order in the society
5. Tested and proven to ascribe to what it takes to build their County and our Nation Kenya.
6. They are committed to welfare of all and to the attainment of the common good
7. Leaders that are accountable to the people and take responsibilities for their own failures and mistakes so as to end the culture of impunity.
8. Leaders who rise above clan, tribal, religious or regional politics so as to unite and bring people together irrespective of where they come from, language or color.
9. Leaders who protect the rights of minorities and have the political will to bring development and equality to all.
10. Leaders who use dialogue in seeking for votes.
11. Leaders who are out to serve and are interested in the wellbeing of all.
12. Leaders known to be men and women of proven integrity.

BAD LEADERS NOT TO VOTE FOR

1. Violent leaders who promote war like activities. They are even ready to kill or assassinate since for them the end justifies the means,

2. Selfish and arrogant,
3. Promote hate speech,
4. Use money to bribe and buy votes.
5. Use their position to threaten and intimidate people to vote for them,
6. Use the tribal card and whip up negative ethnic emotions.
7. Use the tactics of “divide and rule”
8. Misuse public resources for their own selfish ends
9. Are known to use all means, including voter importation to secure their positions.
10. Leaders who exploit the vulnerability of others for their own selfish ends.
11. Leaders who are only after enriching themselves or use political positions to protect their wealth.

CONCLUSION

Dear Kenyans and people of Good will, the destiny of our Nation is in our hands as citizens of this Country. Let us be vigilant in ensuring that we vote in the right leaders whom we know from experience and through the principles they stand for; are leaders capable of leading this Country in the way of peace and the way that will lead to greater justice and prosperity for all.

Let us pray to God that our Elections will be peaceful and that He will give us the wisdom to elect good leaders - men and women of integrity.

GOD BLESS KENYA


Rt. Rev. Philip Anyolo*
CHAIRMAN, Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops



Friday, 28th April 2017

PRESENT

ARCH/DIOCESE

1. Rt. Rev. John Oballa Owaa - Vice -Chairman/Ngong
2. His Eminence John Cardinal Njue - Nairobi
3. Most Rev. Zacchaeus Okoth - Kisumu
4. Most Rev. Peter Kairo - Nyeri
5. Most Rev. Martin Kivuva Musonde - Mombasa
6. Rt. Rev. Cornelius K. Arap Korir - Eldoret
7. Rt. Rev. Joseph Mairura Okemwa - Kisii
8. Rt. Rev. Norman King'oo Wambua - Bungoma
9. Rt. Rev. Peter Kihara - Marsabit
10. Rt. Rev. David Kamau Ng'ang'a- Auxiliary - Nairobi
11. Rt. Rev. Anthony Ileri Mukobo - Isiolo Vicariate
12. Rt. Rev. Virgilio Pante - Maralal
13. Rt. Rev. Salesius Mugambi - Meru
14. Rt. Rev. Emmanuel Okombo - Kericho
15. Rt. Rev. Anthony Muheria - Kitui
16. Rt. Rev. James Maria Wainaina - Apostolic Administrator, Machakos - Murang'a
17. Rt. Rev. Paul Kariuki Njiru - Embu
18. Rt. Rev. Maurice Muhatia Makumba - Nakuru
19. Rt. Rev. Dominic Kimengich - Lodwar
20. Rt. Rev. Joseph Mbatia - Nyahururu
21. Rt. Rev. Joseph Alessandro - Garissa
22. Rt. Rev. Emmanuel Barbara - Malindi
23. Rt. Rev. Joseph Obanyi Sagwe - Kakamega
24. Rt. Rev. Alfred Rotich -Nairobi
25. Very Rev. Benjamin K. Maswili -Apostolic Administrator
Military Ordinariate