INTER RELIGIOUS COUNCIL of KENYA

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CALL FOR TRANQUILITY, RESPONSIBLE LANGUAGE AND TRANSPARENT ELECTORAL PROCESSES

Opening words

1. *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God* (Matthew 5:9)
2. *Speech that causes no distress, that is truthful, pleasant and beneficial, is called the discipline of speech* (Bhagavad Gita 17:15)
3. *O you who have believed, fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice* (Surah Al-Ahzab 33:70)

Preamble

We, the Religious Leaders in Kenya, convening under the banner of the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya (IRCK), meeting here at Ufungamano House, in Nairobi to reflect on the state of our nation, share this call for peace and tranquility as we approach the General Election on Tuesday, 10th August 2027.

On 24th June 2026, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) launched the Election Operations Plan 2025–2027, setting Tuesday, 10th August 2027 as the date of the General Election. On 20th August 2026, the Commission formally declared the commencement of the election period through Gazette Notice No. 13497, bringing into force the Electoral Code of Conduct and the Election Offences Act and publishing a binding electoral calendar. Voter registration is ongoing, political parties are finalising their nomination rules, and party primaries must be concluded by 8th May 2027, ahead of an official campaign period that opens on 29th May 2027.

We note with concern that 2027 electoral cycle is unfolding amid anxiety. Households are struggling with the high cost of living, rising public debt of over 13 trillion shillings, and many young people remain without work. Public trust in electoral institutions remains low and the loss of life during recent protests is still fresh in the memory of many families.

The Kofi Annan Foundation's Electoral Vulnerability Index has warned of a high probability of localised election-related unrest if these triggers are left unchecked. Coordinated misinformation and AI-generated deepfakes now threaten to distort public opinion with one click.

Our nation's history teaches us that violence around elections is never spontaneous. It is planned and incited often through words long before any stone is thrown. As people of faith, we believe that prevention is our sacred duty, and we therefore make the following call to all stakeholders.

1. A Call for Tranquility Among Kenyans

An election is a contest of ideas, not a battle between communities. We therefore appeal to all Kenyans to remain calm, tolerant and united. Your neighbour of a different tribe, faith or political persuasion is not your enemy. We urge every citizen to refuse to be mobilised along ethnic, religious

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or otherwise for violence. We urge all to reject any offer of money to disrupt meetings, intimidate opponents or destroy property.

To our young people, you have set the national agenda through peaceful civic action before, you can do it again, you don't have to be violent. Do not let anyone hire you to cause chaos and disruptions, for your future is too valuable to be traded for a day's wage. Instead, register, vote and hold leaders to account through the ballot.

We call upon the security agencies to remain strictly neutral and professional. They must protect life and property of every citizen and every candidate equally, manage campaign events in a manner that respects human rights, and dismantle any politically linked militias and criminal gangs.

We are concerned with the recurring cases of femicide, forced disappearance and abductions which must stop as we approach the electoral period.

2. Political Decency: Be Mindful of Your Language and End the Culture of Goonism

Words build nations, and words can set nations on fire. We are deeply concerned by the current political mobilization of "us-versus-them", ethnic profiling in the name of political zoning, insults and veiled threats in political speeches, on social media and even at funerals and in places of worship.

We therefore call upon all political leaders, aspirants and their supporters to speak in ways that unite rather than divide Kenyans. All must refrain from hate speech, ethnic contempt, incitement and derogatory language against any community, gender, faith or persons with disabilities. Kenyans are looking for solutions to the cost of living, unemployment and declining public services. Political leaders should sell policies not hate, not fear or division.

We urge all political actors to respect the law and the electoral calendar by observing the Electoral Code of Conduct now in force, bearing in mind that official campaigns begin on 29th May 2027. We ask them to sign and honour peace commitments and to refuse to recruit or finance young people for political intimidation. Political leaders must stop creating, sharing or paying for fake news and AI-generated deep-fakes, for every leader shall be held accountable for what is said and posted in his or her name.

We commit to keep political actors and partisan politics out of our pulpit and mimbar. We know and recognize that places of worship are sanctuaries for all regardless of ethnic or political affiliation and our platforms will not be used to campaign, to divide or to legitimise any political actor.

3.Call for Media Freedom and Responsible Reporting

We express our profound concern over the state of the nation, particularly the shrinking civic space and growing threats to media freedom that risk undermining our democratic gains including the recent incident of arrest of TV journalists while executing their roles as citizens. A free and unhindered press is the lifeblood of a transparent electoral process.

We strongly condemn any forms of harassment, intimidation, or censorship directed at media houses and journalists. We call upon the government, security agencies, and all political factions to unconditionally protect media practitioners and guarantee their safety as they fulfill their constitutional mandate to inform the public.

Simultaneously, we remind our media houses and journalists that the constitutional right to freedom of expression comes with a sacred duty to the people of Kenya. In this politically charged atmosphere, we call for absolute balanced reporting, unyielding professional integrity, and deeply responsible journalism that

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prioritizes national cohesion over sensationalism. The media must refuse to be used as a tool for spreading hate speech, misinformation, or divisive propaganda. As religious leaders, we urge journalists to remain impartial arbiters of truth, ensuring that the Kenyan electorate is equipped with objective information that fosters peace, stability, and a democratic transition that honors the dignity of our nation

4. Electoral Management Institutions: Engage and Be Open with the Public

Trust everywhere is built over time and it can be lost within time. Trust in an election is built long before polling day. It grows when institutions are transparent, accessible and accountable. We note the IEBC's progress, including continuous voter registration since 29th September 2025, the expansion of diaspora registration to 26 countries, and the planned independent forensic audit of the voter register. However, public anxiety persists over funding gaps, transparent voter registration process, delayed reforms, stalled procurement of election technology and the integrity of results transmission.

We therefore urge IEBC to hold regular public briefings on its state of preparedness. All procurement should be carried out openly and on time, and the Commission should engage faith, youth, media and civil society actors across all levels.

We call upon the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties to ensure that party nomination rules and processes are fair, transparent and free of imposition, since nominations are often the first flashpoint of violence. Parliament should fast-track pending amendments to electoral laws and campaign financing regulations so that the rules of the game are known and agreed well before the campaign. The National Treasury, in turn, should release the necessary funding to IEBC's in good time to avoid budget shortfalls compromising credibility of our elections.

We further urge the Judiciary, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the National Police Service to communicate clearly on their preparations and readiness to handle election offences and disputes promptly and impartially. The NCIC, media and technology platforms, for their part, should fact-check political claims, label manipulated content and act swiftly against coordinated hate speech, including in local languages.

5. Commending the National Cohesion and Integration Commission

We commend the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) for its firm and visible action against hate speech and ethnic incitement in recent times. The Commission has opened investigations and summoned leaders suspected of breaching the National Cohesion and Integration Act, 2008. These include senior national and county leaders from across the political divide. This sends a clear message that no one is above the law and that *hate speech is not free speech.*

To sustain this momentum, we call for the law to be applied equally to all, regardless of political affiliation, office or community, with due process and the presumption of innocence respected throughout. We urge the National Police Service to support the NCIC in enforcing legal actions where there is sufficient evidence. We urge the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the courts to conclude hate speech cases expeditiously, because investigations that are never concluded erode public confidence. We also call for adequate resources for the NCIC and other constitutional commissions in order to enable them dispense their mandate including; county-level presence and the capacity to monitor hate speech online and in local languages, and for stronger joint early-warning networks linking the Commission, the security agencies, faith leaders and local peace committees.

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6. Our Commitment

As the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya, we commit to using our platforms: churches, mosques, temples and other spaces convened and controlled by religious leaders across the country to preach peace and tolerance and to conduct civic and voter education. As part of this campaign, we will develop and popularise a guide for electing leaders with values. We will run grassroots interfaith dialogue forums and support local peace committees so that political disputes stay off the streets. We will work with all like-minded partners and stakeholders to create and propagate positive narratives and share fact-checked messages that counter misinformation.

As part of our preparedness, IRCK will mobilise and equip the National Peace and Mediation Team (NPMT) a team of respected religious and nonreligious team of mediators, trusted across faith, political and ethnic divides to defuse tensions before they escalate and help resolve disputes arising from party nominations, campaigns and results to serve as insider mediators throughout the electoral cycle. The Team will remain on standby at national and county levels and will work closely with the NCIC, the National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management, the Uwiano Platform for Peace, local peace committees and the security agencies, through shared early-warning and rapid-response arrangements.

7. Conclusion

Kenya belongs to all of us, and peace is the responsibility of every citizen, every leader and every institution. Let us go to the 2027 General Election as one nation; one people, competing on ideas and accepting the will of the people as freely expressed and given by God.

We discourage politicized donations and deny partisan actors from the use of religious platforms. Above all, we will continue to pray for our nation, its leaders and every institution charged with delivering a free, fair, credible and peaceful election.

May God bless Kenya.

Signed on this 5th day of November 2026 at Ufungamano House, Nairobi

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