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## NOW IS THE TIME TO REDEEM KENYA

### COMMUNIQUE OF THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE FORUM

*Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool (Isaiah 1: 18)*

*Perhaps Allah will put, between you and those whom you have been enemies among them, affection. And Allah is competent and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful (Quran 60: 7)*

#### **PREAMBLE**

The National Dialogue Forum has been held here at *Ufungamano House*, Nairobi, bringing together representatives from religious institutions, business fraternity, civil society, and labour movement. The Forum was aimed at reviewing the state of the nation with a goal of laying a framework for resolving the persistent political conflicts that have put us on a downward spiral that could end in destruction.

We have recognized that the current political crisis and violence is portending an existential threat on our nation and requires urgent measures to stem it.

#### **1. State of the Nation**

Since the beginning of this year, the country has been plunged in a state of tension, violence and political dispute that has split the country. It is very worrying that during the demonstrations witnessed since the beginning of July, we have documented 27 persons shot dead by police during demonstrations. This cannot continue and must be brought to an end immediately.

We take this moment to condole with all the families that have lost loved ones, and are praying for all those injured physically and psychologically for speedy recovery. However,

we as a nation must take necessary action to ensure no more deaths, injuries and destruction occur on account of unsettled political and socio-economic crisis.

## **2. Message to Kenyans**

Dear Brothers and Sisters, people of Kenya,

We heartily implore you to peacefully coexist. Refuse to engage in violence despite the provocations or incitements. Do remember that those who are inciting you will secure themselves, their families and properties when the country goes on fire. It is you and your family who will be left suffering.

Let us all remember that the solution to the financial crisis and devastation of poverty we are experiencing is not solved by violence, but rather through people-focussed governance devoid of corruption and impunity.

We appeal to all of us to adopt a new form of *maandamano* by demonstrating peace and calm.

## **3. Embrace Dialogue for the sake of the Nation**

Through the Constitution of Kenya 2010, we agreed to establish a nation based on dialogue and consultations through well outlined structures. The cycle of pre and post election crises we have witnessed over the decades is a reflection of the failure by political leaders to choose dialogue to address their disputes and agreements.

We now call upon His Excellency President William Ruto and Rt Honourable Raila Odinga to embrace dialogue and end the grandstanding that is pushing the country deeper into crisis. As the top political leaders in the country, you have a mandate of entrenching a culture of inclusive and multi-stakeholder dialogue and consultations to address issues rather than confrontations.

The dialogue we recommend should be based on a clearly defined framework that will create a platform for Kenyans to discuss the challenges facing their lives and find amicable solutions. The framework should provide for engagement of all stakeholders, and should be buttressed by religious institutions for sustainability. There must be a firm commitment that the outcomes of the process will be implemented to avoid a repeat of what has happened in the past.

At the outset, the following will comprise the agenda of the dialogue process:

- a) Constitutional and Legal reforms
- b) Land Reforms
- c) Addressing Poverty, Inequality and Regional Imbalances
- d) Addressing Unemployment, particularly among the youth
- e) Addressing transparency, accountability and countering impunity
- f) Enabling constitutional commissions and independent agencies to deliver their mandates

For avoidance of doubt, we are not pushing for power sharing between government and opposition, for these two political structures have distinct and cardinal roles outlined in the Constitution.

#### **4. Immediate Measures**

To facilitate an environment for dialogue, we call upon His Excellency President Ruto to listen to the people of Kenya by repealing the Finance Act 2023 to review the heavy taxation proposed.

We are also calling upon Rt Hon Odinga to listen to the people and immediately call off the ongoing demonstrations.

#### **5. Intermediate Interventions**

Further, we appeal for a resumption Bi-Partisan talks with a single agenda of facilitating the reconstituting of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC). We aver that the country is currently in a very precarious position that can lead to an existential crisis should elections be required without a properly constituted commission in place. Further, there remains only 10 months for the cardinal process of review of boundaries of electoral units.

Having an amicable process for the recruitment of the Commissioners will restore political stability and enable the nation to bring the 2022 General Elections to closure.

## **6. Violence During Demonstrations**

We are extremely concerned by the level of violence witnessed in our country in the recent demonstrations. The demonstrators and security agents are all Kenyans, and none of them deserves to have violence visited upon them. We remind all of us that the main mandate of police during demonstrations is to provide security to persons exercising their constitutional right to picket. On their part, participants in demonstrations have a responsibility to uphold peace, be unarmed and picket in the locations and routes indicated in their notice.

We thus strongly condemn the application of excessive force and use of live bullets by police when containing the chaos during demonstrations, and call upon the Inspector General to guide the officer on legal and humane approaches.

On their part, we call upon organizers of demonstrations to ensure that their supporters adhere to the rule of law and do not provoke or attack the officers, and avoid looting and destruction of properties.

## **7. Engage the Youth**

Cognizably, over 70% of the population of Kenya are below 35 years of age. This youth bulge cannot be ignored, and should be the focus of policies and programmes in the nation. The youth must be engaged, not just talked about.

We appeal to the youth to be voices of reason and agents of peace in the nation.

## **8. Conclusion**

We conclude by reminding all Kenyans that we are in a delicate situation that requires careful consideration of the action of each of us. Let us exercise restraint in every situation, so that we redeem our nation from the precipice.

Let us continually commit to prayer we make through our National Anthem:

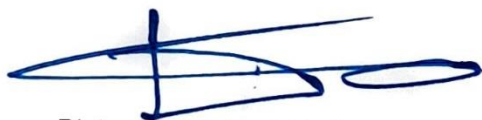
*O God of all creation, bless this our land and nation; Justice be our Shield and Defender*

*May we dwell in unity, peace and liberty; Plenty be found within our borders*

Signed on this 21<sup>st</sup> day of July 2023 at *Ufungamano House, Nairobi*



Rt Rev John Oballa Owaa  
*Chairman, KCCB CJPD*



Bishop Dr John Okinda  
*Vice Chairman, NCCK*



Al-Hajj Hassan Ole Naado  
*Chairman, SUPKEM*

**On behalf of:**

Center for Multiparty Democracy  
East African Equal Access International  
Elections Observation Group  
Electoral Law and Governance Institute for Africa  
Independent Medico-Legal Unit  
Kenya Human Rights Commission  
Kenya Private Sector Alliance  
Law Society of Kenya  
Media Council of Kenya  
The Institute for Social Accountability