

# Inter-Religious Council of Uganda



## Religions for Peace

### PRESS STATEMENT

#### MESSAGE FROM THE IRCU COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS ON THE URGENT NEED TO PROMOTE JUSTICE, PEACE, NON-VIOLENT AND CREDIBLE ELECTIONS (2020/21)

**Fellow citizens,**

As the Council of Presidents of the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda, we wish to address ourselves to all the citizens of Uganda in light of what is happening in our Country. We are deeply concerned of the violent events that occurred in our Country yesterday Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020, where the whole world witnessed brutal arrests of political candidates; Hon. Robert Kyagulanyi and Hon. Amuriat Oboi, the destruction of property due to riots and sadly the loss of lives of some innocent civilians.

We express our deep and sad condolences to the bereaved families! May Almighty God grant them eternal rest and be rest assured of our prayers.

It is incumbent upon us as your religious leaders to express our concern on the current political injustices in the country and to provide guidance especially in such a critical period in the history of our country. This is pertinent especially when we face unprecedented situations of the global pandemic of **COVID-19** and campaigning for the national elections.

**Recalling** our sad history which has been characterized by political and Constitutional instability,

**Recognizing** the current forces of oppression and exploitation during the ongoing campaigns.

**Committed** to building a Nation based on the principles of social justice, unity, peace, equality, democracy, freedom, and a healthy and secure environment.

We therefore call upon the Electoral Commission and the various security organs to adhere to the human rights principles enshrined in the national objectives, and practices while being law abiding and following our National Constitution as well as God's word in the Holy Bible and Holy Koran.

Our National motto says **“FOR GOD AND OUR COUNTRY”** which means that whatever we do or say should be based on Godly behavior and respect as well as our beloved Country and our fellow citizens. Furthermore, our National Constitution which all citizens of this Country must respect and uphold, calls for justice, peace and good governance. It is for this reason that we have reminded you all citizens of Uganda to adhere to our National Constitution as well as the word of God found in the Holy Bible and the Holy Quran:

*Surat 5:8 Al Maidah, “All you who have believed be persistently standing for Allah, witnesses in justice and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just, that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah, indeed Allah is acquainted with what you do.”*

Isaiah 1:17, *“Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed.”*

We do hereby issue this press statement to address the growing insecurity and political unrest in our Country.

#### **To fellow citizens**

Uganda is our mother land and is a place where all must be safe and peaceful so as to thrive. We all have a duty to preserve, protect and uphold the dignity of our country by putting a high premium on every life irrespective of our diversities. It is also our responsibility to care for the health and safety of each other during this COVID-19 environment. Fellow Ugandans please wash your hands, sanitize seriously, ensure social distance and wear a mask correctly.

#### **To the political leaders**

It is only 9 days since the commencement of the national election campaigns. In this short period, we have noted with concern increasing cases of violence across the country that threaten to undermine the integrity and fairness of our elections. We have witnessed Candidates being blocked from accessing campaign venues like Hon. Henry Tumukunde, supporters roughed up and teargassed, candidates denied access to the media, large processions that are in contravention of the “SOPs” and in some instances growing attempts to build party territories by political candidates accompanied by vigilantes to deny Ugandans their right to access any region in Uganda thus denying the electorate their right to listen to the diverse voices and this has led to increasing frustration, fear and anxiety within the population.

We call upon candidates who are vying for the various political offices to take personal responsibility to guide the population on their safety with relevant

information so that they are able to make informed choices in a safe environment.

### **Security Agencies**

While we imagine the dilemma faced by the security agencies, we call for actions that honor the rights and dignity of all Ugandans irrespective of their political affiliations. The army have breached Article 209 that states that the army will cooperate with civilian authority in emergency situations and in cases of natural disaster like COVID-19. We noted with concern that the police were in breach of the COVID-19 SOPs and of article 211 (3) that stipulates that the police force shall be nationalistic, patriotic, professional, disciplined, competent and productive; and its members shall be citizens of Uganda of good character.

We urge all men and women in Uniform to uphold the Ugandan constitution and all relevant laws and ought to treat all citizens of Uganda fairly and equally irrespective of their political affiliation because they are actually their brothers and sisters.

We call for the immediate release of all people who were arrested yesterday. In the event that they committed crimes, they should be presented to the courts of law as the law stipulates. We call upon the leadership of government and the various security agencies to be open to continuous dialogue with the different political players as a means of solving conflict as we consider this as a cheaper and more humane and civilized way of resolving conflicts.





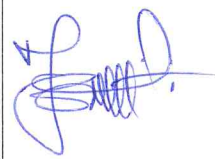
### **Electoral Commission**

Article 61 of the constitution mandates the electoral commission to ensure free and fair elections. As religious leaders, we expect the EC to take charge of the electoral process including the security arrangements of all political candidates and ensure an enabling environment for all stakeholders irrespective of their party affiliation.

Finally, we reassure you our dear fellow citizens of our continued prayers and engagement of all stakeholders towards stabilizing our country and working towards a meaningful and peaceful election based on national dialogue in the light of our National Constitution, and the Holy Scriptures. We declare this weekend, that is; Friday, Saturday and Sunday as days for National Prayers in our respective worship centers.

**For God and Our Country!**

Signed by the Council of Presidents on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup>, November 2020.

No.	Name and Designation	Signature
1.	His Eminence Sheikh Shaban Ramadhan Mubaje, Grand Mufti of Uganda Chairperson, Council of Presidents	
2.	His Grace Dr. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga Archbishop of Kampala Roman Catholic Church Uganda Co-Chairperson, Council of Presidents	
3.	His Eminence Metropolitan Jonah Lwanga Archbishop Uganda Orthodox Church Co-Chairperson, Council of Presidents	
4.	His Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Stephen Samuel Kaziimba Mugalu Archbishop, Province of the Church of Uganda Co-Chairperson, Council of Presidents	
5.	Pastor Dr. Daniel Matte President, Seventh-day Adventist Uganda union Co-Chairperson, Council of Presidents	
6.	Apostle Dr. Joseph Serwadda Presiding Apostle Born Again Faith in Uganda Co-Chairperson, Council of Presidents	
7.	Bishop Joshua Lwere General Overseer National Alliance of Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches in Uganda Co-Chairperson, Council of Presidents	
8.	Joshua Kitakule Secretary General Inter-Religious Council of Uganda Council Secretary	