

KENYA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS



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KENYA CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT

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"Do Not Repay Evil With Evil Or Insult With Insult. On The Contrary, Repay Evil With Blessing, Because To This You Were Called So That You May Inherit A Blessing" (1 Peter 3:9).

Preamble

Dear Kenyans, we wish to start by reminding all Kenyans that God has blessed our country immensely in its people and resources. Moreover, we have had an admirable stability as a nation which is envy of many.

We, the Catholic Bishops have consistently insisted on the need to safeguard and strengthen our bonds as a nation, uphold justice amongst the people and always act before God in conscience.

It is in this regard that we make this statement.

1. Appeal for Non-Violence at all Costs and Return to Dialogue

We make this statement in the backdrop of the announced weekly three-day demonstrations. We have made all efforts to appeal to both the President and the Leader of Opposition to find a peaceful way to end the seeming standoff. Specifically, we have appealed to Azimio La Umoja to seek an alternative strategy that would not hold the entire country hostage and lend itself to violence and destruction.

The recent demonstrations that have taken place across the country have resulted in significant negative consequences, including

injuries, property damage, trauma and loss of lives. We now see the threat of escalation in the declared three days of demonstration per week. There is no justifiable reason whatsoever to be violent. We know that engaging in peaceful protests and demonstrations allows individuals to express their grievances and concerns without causing harm to themselves or others. Can we truly hope against hope that demonstrations will be peaceful after the experience in all previous demonstrations? We are calling the leaders and the country to embrace non-violence. Kenyans and our leaders must be willing to listen to each other for the sake of peace in our country. We condemn what we have seen simmering as ethnic based violence spotted in some parts of our country.

We now make this passionate appeal to President William Ruto and Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga to give dialogue a chance. We demand that the failed bipartisan talks should be resumed in a different context that brings on board the religious leaders and some other eminent persons and bodies. We believe that there is no problem, however difficult, that cannot be solved through dialogue. We must at all costs avoid the loss of lives. No further blood should be shed.

2. The Socio-economic Distress and Repeal of the Finance Act

Dear Kenyans, we do realize that part of the disappointment and disillusionment of Kenyans that is leading to the grave agitation and anger is the severe economic distress. The high cost of living has created a burden on individuals and families, making it difficult for them to meet their basic needs and maintain a decent standard of living. We realize that many are struggling to afford essential goods and services, to secure stable employment, or are facing financial hardships that affect education and healthcare access.

Within this background, the recently enacted Finance Act places an unsustainable burden on already distressed citizens, especially those within the low income bracket. We, therefore, ask the President to repeal the Finance Act and institute a process that will seek to achieve the same goals within the current economic context.

3. Police Brutality

We, the Catholic Bishops, strongly condemn the police brutality inflicted upon innocent Kenyans during the demonstrations. We understand there are criminals who disguise themselves among protesters to vandalize property, steal from people, injure and even kill people in their evil schemes. These are the ones the police should go for to ensure peaceful demonstrations are conducted according to the law do so.

We want to emphasize on this issue and express a firm stance against such acts of violence and abuse of power. Police have an obligation to deal with criminals disguised as demonstrators. Police cannot take advantage to brutalize innocent Kenyans. Such acts are unacceptable and must not be tolerated under any circumstance. Police brutality undermines the fundamental principles of human rights, justice, and the rule of law.

We send our message of solidarity to those who were brutalized by the police. We acknowledge the pain, trauma, and injustice suffered by our brothers and sisters who have experienced violence at the hands of those entrusted with protecting the public. We remind the police of their professional conduct in dealing with demonstrations.

4. Government must listen to the plight of Kenyans

Many Kenyans feel unheard and overlooked by their Government. We hear every day different discordant and often conflicting messages, from our government leaders. We are particularly appalled by unbecoming, insulting and inciting statements made by leaders. This is causing confusion among the population regarding the direction the country is taking. Many things remain unclear on the Government policy and direction; for example, education, health, plight of poor, strategies to improve employment, etc. The lack of transparency and accountability of social funds during Covid-19 and drought has aggravated feelings of isolation and neglect.

To restore trust and address the concerns of the people, it is imperative for the government to actively listen to the plight of Kenyans, provide clear and honest explanations for unfulfilled promises, and prioritize policies that alleviate socio-economic burdens.

We call for adherence to the rule of law both for the citizen and the leadership. This includes respect for court orders and rulings.

5. We can find local solutions

Dear Kenyans, despite the challenges and uncertainties faced by the country, it is essential to remember that Kenya possesses the potential to develop local solutions to address its problems. It is crucial not to lose hope and succumb to despair. By working together and engaging in constructive dialogue, Kenyans can collectively brainstorm and implement innovative approaches to tackle the socio-economic issues at hand.

We propose a consensus building convention under the auspices of religious leaders with a multi-sectoral participation to identify the major issues ailing our country and to map out a path we can walk together in order to address them.

Local solutions tailored to the unique needs and context of the country have the potential to bring about sustainable change and improve the lives of the people. Rather than relying solely on external interventions, emphasizing local problem-solving empowers individuals and communities to take ownership of their challenges and work towards meaningful solutions.

In conclusion, we all have an obligation to pursue peace, avoid violence, and respond to wrongdoing with love, forgiveness and righteousness. We appeal to all Kenyans and people of good will to pray for our country and especially dedicate the day of worship this weekend as a national prayer day. We ask our Catholic faithful to dedicate special prayers on Sunday the 23rd July 2023 so that God can touch our hearts and restore this country to peace and unity. As

a God-loving country, we believe in reconciliation and resolving conflicts in a peaceful and just manner, reflecting the teachings and values of our faith in God.

Signed:



Most Rev. Martin Kivuva Musonde
CHAIRMAN OF KCCB /
ARCHBISHOP OF MOMBASA

Date: 19th July 2023

NAME	DIOCESE
1. Most Rev. Martin Kivuva Musonde	- Chairman of KCCB / Mombasa
2. Rt. Rev. Maurice Muhatia Makumba	- Vice-Chairman/Kisumu
3. Most Rev. Anthony Muheria	- Nyeri
4. Most Rev. Philip Anyolo	- Nairobi
5. Rt. Rev. Joseph Mairura Okemwa	- Kisii
6. Rt. Rev. Alfred Rotich	- Kericho
7. Rt. Rev. Norman King'oo Wambua	- Machakos
8. Rt. Rev. Peter Kihara	- Marsabit
9. Rt. Rev. David Kamau Ng'ang'a	- Auxiliary Nairobi
10. Rt. Rev. Anthony Ileri Mukobo	- Isiolo
11. Rt. Rev. Salesius Mugambi	- Meru
12. Rt. Rev. James Maria Wainaina	- Murang'a
13. Rt. Rev. Paul Kariuki Njiru	- Embu
14. Rt. Rev. Dominic Kimengich	- Eldoret
15. Rt. Rev. John Oballa Owaa	- Ngong
16. Rt. Rev. Joseph Mbatia	- Nyahururu
17. Rt. Rev. Joseph Obanyi Sagwe	- Kakamega
18. Rt. Rev. Joseph Mwongela	- Kitui
19. Rt. Rev. Michael Odiwa	- Homa Bay
20. Rt. Rev. Willybard Lagho	- Malindi
21. Rt. Rev. Mark Kadima	- Bungoma

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| 22. Rt. Rev. George Muthaka | - Garissa |
| 23. Rt. Rev. John Mbinda | - Lodwar |
| 24. Rt. Rev. Hieronymus Emusugut Joya | - Malalal |
| 25. Rt. Rev. Henry Juma Odonya | - Kitale |
| 26. Rt. Rev. Cleophas Oseso Tuka | - Nakuru |
| 27. Msgr. Benjamin K. Maswili | - Apostolic Administrator, Military Ordinariate |