



PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

7TH OCTOBER 2020

STOP DIVISIVE, DISRUPTIVE POLITICS

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission is deeply concerned by the heightened political temperature in the country, which threatens to tear apart the social cohesion among Kenyans that has been carefully built up over the years.

Indeed, what we are witnessing in the country today is a likely precursor of violent conflicts that would lead to loss of lives, destruction of property and displacement of people such as witnessed during the 2007/2008 post-election violence. We note with great concern that if the current trajectory is left unattended to, the country could well go the way Rwanda did in 1994.

With two years still to go before the 2022 elections, Kenya is becoming increasingly polarised, as politicians mobilise

their supporters against each other. As a Commission, we are mandated to facilitate and promote equality of opportunity, good relations, harmony and peaceful co-existence between the different ethnic, religious and racial communities. In short, our main goal – conceived in the aftermath of our 2007/2008 crisis – is to promote national unity.

We appeal to the topmost leaders of the main political parties in the country to show visible and positive leadership by persuading their rank and file and their supporters to hold on to a peaceful, cohesive and united Kenya. In particular, leaders must desist from uttering statements that provoke hate, ethnic division and other unlawful behaviour.

All Kenyans have rights to live, make a living, travel, vie for leadership, and work in any part of the Republic without fear of molestation, intimidation, harassment, being maligned, or being labeled stranger.

We have also noted with concern statements by leaders who have been warning others that they have to seek permits for their meetings. Yet Kenyans cannot be considered outsiders in their own country. Only the police need to be legally notified of such public meetings. It is wrong and unconstitutional to prohibit people from moving around or meeting. These are liberties guaranteed in our Constitution. Therefore, we call upon leaders to go ahead and organise their meetings if they wish, but to ensure that they are peaceful.

The rule of law is a long-standing principle of governance in Kenya. We therefore condemn violence in any part of the country, and will hold to account anyone fanning hate, tension and violence between communities and groups. We also wish to remind all our leaders, be it at the national or county level that no Kenyan is above the law.

As a Commission, we are calling on all institutions of Government, and independent commission to be non-partisan while discharging their mandate. We implore all

law-enforcing agencies and indeed all other Government institutions to discharge their duties justly, dispassionately and impartially.

In the same spirit we call upon the political leadership to exercise tolerance and embrace peace as they engage the public. We are aware that Kenyans are grappling with many challenges, not least the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic that has seen many Kenyans lose their livelihoods. As a nation, now is not the time to engage in divisive succession politics, never mind if it is carried out through insults, confrontations, sabotage and hard-tackle tactics. Our politicians must exercise tolerance as they go about their competitive campaigning.

Fellow Kenyans, we must cultivate a culture of non-violence, respect for the rule of law and tolerance for divergent opinions. We as a Commission will continue working tirelessly to jealously guard and protect our peace and national unity. Most importantly and for obvious reasons, we call on all Kenyans to shun incitement and

refuse to be misused by politicians and other leaders for their selfish gains.

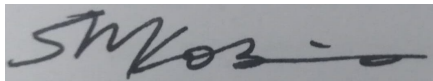
It is time to embrace issue-based, people-centered politics over a politics based merely on the win-lose zero-sum dynamic of ethnic identity. As a people we should never again allow the country to be pushed to the precipice by anyone.

With Kenya being a member of the UN Security Council, in keeping with the UN Strategic Development Goal No. 16, NCIC will do all in its powers to ensure that peace thrives, so that we may remain steadfast and united ahead of the 2022 general elections.

Kenya is at a crossroads between either chaos and violence or hope for a better future. It is therefore the responsibility of the leaders to whom we have entrusted our lives to promote the peace we have so jealously guarded. And up to the rest of us to follow those leaders who do.

As a Commission we shall work closely with other government agencies, religious organisations, the media, civil society, the private sector, the diplomatic community and development partners to deliver a peaceful Kenyan society where we dwell in unity as “One People in One Nation with One Destiny”.

God Bless Kenya.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'S. Kobia'.

REV. DR. SAMUEL KOBIA.

CHAIRPERSON, NATIONAL COHESION AND
INTEGRATION COMMISSION