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## PRESS STATEMENT

14<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2023

### UNITING KENYA: A CALL FOR TOLERANCE, PEACE AND COHESION

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1. The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), is mandated to facilitate and promote equality of opportunity, good relations, harmony and peaceful coexistence of different ethnic, racial and religious communities in Kenya.
2. We note with great concern the **loss of lives, trail of massive destruction of both public and private property** in most parts of the Country as a result of the demonstrations that took place on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023. At the onset we condemn the killing of innocent Kenyans, teargassing of learning institutions and the burning of the Kenyan Flag .

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**Mission:** *To promote national unity, equity and the elimination of all forms of ethnic discrimination by facilitating equality of opportunities, peaceful resolution of conflicts and respect for diversity among Kenyan communities.*

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**Commissioners: Hon. Abdulaziz A. Farah, Hon. Eng. Philip O. Okundi, Hon. Dorcas L. Kedogo, Mr. Sam Kona,**

**Dr. Danvas Makori,**

**AG. Commission Secretary/CEO -Mr Harrison Kariuki**

Definitely, this is an impediment to all the political, economic and social gains we have made as a country over the years. As a Commission we wish to sincerely send our condolences to the families and friends who **LOST** their loved ones in the unfortunate mayhem.

3. Whereas the Constitution 2010, guarantees the Rights to freedom of expression as well as freedom of peaceful assembly, and human rights, this freedom is **RESTRICTED** when it leads to provocation of imminent violence as witnessed on Wednesday.
4. We have noted that the last few demonstrations are degenerating into ethnic based conflicts and violence. A case at hand is the ongoing ethnic clashes in Sondu along Kericho – Kisumu border. As a matter of fact, communities residing in this region have had historical difference that have in the past led to tribal clashes. Sondu was among other areas that had been flagged out as a hotspot area. As a Commission, we have together with our key partners invested huge amount of resources that had since brought peaceful coexistence.

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5. We have noted with great concern that youth mobilization to engage in violent conflict has provided fodder for criminal and armed militia gangs across the affected areas . Over the past there has been an increase in the numbers of such gangs. According to the National Crime Research Centre Report 2017, there were 326 groups of criminal gangs. This number could have risen over time. Hence, we must curtail any action that will give the gangs leverage in their criminal acts. Since If this is left unchecked, it is likely to reverse the gains of peace achieved in 2022 General Elections, as well as successful advances made by institutions such as NCIC, Security agencies among others. Therefore, we urge the mobilizers of these youth and militia to stop taking advantage of this vulnerable groups and as 31<sup>st</sup> American Herbert Hoover said “ **older men declare war, but it the youth that must fight and die.**”

6. There is an upsurge of terrorists’ attacks particularly in Mandera, Lamu and Wajir counties. Clearly, the terrorists are taking advantage of the ongoing situation in Kenya. Hence, leaders from all political divide should come together to fight this common enemy. We are aware that our resources are limited. Therefore, a further stretch on the same will not

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only derail the gains we have made as country, but will also risk our security.

7. While it is true that the cost of living is becoming strenuous to many Kenyans, the solution for the same is not **VIOLENCE AND ANARCHY**. Consequently, we are urging Kenyans to give dialogue a chance. As a matter of fact, matters Finance Act 2023 is currently before Court. We therefore call on every interested party to give the Court an opportunity to settle this matter amicably as we have done before on other issues.
8. We urge H.E. President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander-of Defense Forces, Dr. William Samoei Ruto EGH, and the Azimio Principal Rt. Hon Raila Amolo Odinga to reconsider dialogue in addressing the issues ailing the Country. We urge them to reactivate and expand the **Bipartisan Parliamentary Committee** to address these issues. We believe that the solution shall be arrived at amicably.
9. Similarly, we are calling on all the **DEMONSTRATORS** to exercise tolerance and picket peacefully. We are quite disheartened to see young people provoking the law enforcement officers as well as destroying

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property worth billions, bullying and harassing very innocent Kenyans. This is unacceptable given that our Economy is already ailing. We cannot allow further destructions and therefore we urge the political leaders and opinion shapers to tame their followers.

10. We are urging the **POLICE** to implement their mandate within the confines of the law and avoid human rights abuses which include the use of live ammunitions to disperse crowds. The loss of some of the lives is as a result of live bullets! No life is worth loosing in demonstrations. **Every life matters!**
11. We note with concern the rise in misinformation and disinformation bordering hate speech and ethnic contempt across the social media platforms. We urge the netizens to avoid forwarding unverified information that escalate tension amongst communities.
12. We reiterate our commitment to ensuring that we jealously protect Kenya's peace and cohesion. We cannot afford to slide back to the 2007/2008 post-election violence episode. When all is said and done each

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an everyone of us has a responsibility to protect our homeland Kenya.

God bless Kenya.



**Ms. Wambui Nyutu OGW**

**Commission Vice Chairperson**

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