



**CHAIRMAN’S ADDRESS ON THE STATE OF PREPAREDNESS IN RESPECT OF THE
FRESH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION SCHEDULED FOR TOMORROW THE 26TH OF
OCTOBER, 2017**

Fellow Kenyans

Every great journey of success be it for an individual, an organization and even a nation –as great as ours - gets to the point where tough decisions have to be made. It is the point, where there is a battle between status quo and moving forward. It is the battle between what is and what can or may be. At such legacy defining moments, many have aborted ship and many destinies have been destroyed.

I have watched and heard of terrible things that Kenyans have experienced in recent times in the hands of the police, who are enjoined to protect them. Fellow Kenyans, excessive use of force by the police is not an illusion. It is the dark reality that some people have unfortunately had to experience in recent times. When the very people that we are expected to run to in times of trouble are the ones attacking us, then as Country, we are at our lowest.

The innocent Kenyans who have signed up as staff of IEBC to serve their nation, never for one minute expected that the job would be a risk to their lives. Only last week, the house of one of my staff was burnt down to ashes by people who up till a few weeks ago were friendly neighbors. When your decision to serve your country at home, in a hallowed responsibility of midwifing democracy becomes as risky as going to war, then we are at our lowest.

Fellow Kenyans, Last week I could not assure my staff and the Kenyan people of their security when carrying out their duties and when voting. Today, I am glad to come and give you, the Kenyan people a report on the progress that has been made on this front.

Through the Commission, I have consulted extensively with the **Independent Policing Oversight Authority**. We have agreed that police brutality has to stop and I have been assured that the oversight authority will be vigilant and has indeed as we speak, put all officers on notice. Any erring member of the police service engaged in harassing an innocent Kenyan for exercising their rights – including the right to peaceful and lawful demonstrations will face the full wrath of the law.

Further the Commission has received a guarantee from the **Inspector General of Police** in writing that certain strategic and operational changes have been effected to ensure that peaceful and lawful expression of human rights will never be treated as a crime in this country: but that the sacrosanct security to life and property is also lawfully upheld.

It is indeed sad that some Kenyans find it easier to protest about Kenyan issues when they are abroad, than when they are within the borders of their own country. One need not be bold or fearless to protest, because even the right to protest is constitutionally guaranteed and protected.

Freedom of expression is one of the key pillars of our democratic state and I am happy today that the Kenya Police and the Independent Policing Oversight Authority have undertaken to work hand in glove with the Kenyan People and with the IEBC to ensure that things change for the better during this defining moment.

Fellow Kenyans, I met last week with the Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga and we discussed the readiness of the Commission and the political temperature in the country. Earlier on this week, I also met with His Excellency the President to discuss the same issues. The President, gave the assurance of protection for all Kenyans whether they vote or not and regardless of what part of the country they are from.

I want to speak to and for all Kenyans today whether you are voting or not. I also speak for the business community, the students, the traders, the boda-boda operators, the tourism industry which is a key pillar of our economy and all other segments of the Kenyan economy both at the macro and micro level. What do all these have in common today? They are ailing.

Regardless of the political divide they are affiliated to - People are tired of the uncertainty, people are tired of the slowdown that is gradually getting to a lockdown, and people are tired of the fact that their lives have been put on hold. Our children are tired because their schools are being closed and they cannot learn.

Fellow Kenyans, democracy was never designed for a nation to come into lockdown mode because of an election.

The truth is that regardless of your political affiliation, you all are most likely to fall into one of the categories of those who are tired, from the extended electioneering. Democracy is about the voice of the people. The voice of the Kenyan people today, cries out that they are tired. I have never heard of a nation where one day to the scheduled date of the election, the question on the lips of everyone is, “will there be an election?”

Fellow Kenyans, I wish to announce to you today on behalf of the IEBC, that based on the assurances given to this Commission by the relevant authorities and the security agencies, based on the progress that has been made in the Commission, and above all, based on the voices of millions of tired Kenyans, who want closure and who want to move on with their lives, the elections as scheduled, will go on tomorrow the 26th of October, 2017. The key changes made by the Commission include:

- Increased KIEMS Capacity by installing Safaricom SIM Cards as the primary, in addition to those from Airtel and Telkom as secondary, variously in all the Kits;
- Candidates have seconded two (2) ICT Agents each, who have been embedded into our electoral technology team, with defined rights, to participate in verification of the transmission of results;
- All 291 returning officers will print out Forms 34B, and give copies to all candidates for verification;
- The National returning officer [NRO] will only announce results after physically receiving all Forms 34As and signing a handover of Forms 34Bs.

On Election material; The Commission has received all the ballot papers, and all the Elections materials and personnel have been dispatched to their respective constituencies. The ballot papers will feature the names and parties of all the eight (8) presidential candidates. The materials are currently being further dispatched to the polling stations countrywide.

Plans are underway to get all the ballot papers and Election materials to all the polling stations within the shortest time possible. We have also completed training for all the returning officers and their deputies along with all presiding officers and other elections officials. As at this evening, all election officials will at their respective jurisdictions ahead of tomorrow's poll.

Please note that all Returning Officers who had issues in the August 8 General Elections were taken through disciplinary process and administrative action taken in compliance with Commission HR policy and Procedure manual.

On Results Transmission: As mentioned earlier on the Commission has provided clarity on complementary mechanisms for results transmission by developing and gazetting complementary methods to be used in the result of results transmission failure.

The Kenya Integrated Electoral Management System (KIEMS) has been reconfigured to transmit both text and images in the results management process. Only the scanned images of all the relevant results forms, without accompanying text, will be projected to the public through a dedicated portal.

On the Judgment by Odunga, J in J.R. 628 of 2017 rendered today; the learned Judge has not invalidated the appointment of Returning Officers and their deputies; neither has he found their gazettment to be illegal. Therefore the judgment does not affect the repeat presidential polls tomorrow. It should be noted that the Commission has deployed the same officials gazetted for the August 8th polls; which list had been shared with all the Parties. These officials are permanent staff of the Commission and vetting them as Returning Officers is a continuous process, save for amendments where changes had been effected.

The Commission gazetted the Returning Officers for the 26th October polls and posted their names on the Commission's website.

Finally, the Commission takes this opportunity to invite Kenyans to direct questions and seek clarifications from our 24-hour call center. We have dedicated the following hotlines for any voter 1527, 1537, 1538, and 1539.

All polling stations will open tomorrow at 6 am for Kenyans to exercise their democratic right. The Commission thanks you for your patience as we prepared for this fresh presidential election, and would like to urge you to wake up early tomorrow morning, present yourselves at your respective polling stations and vote for your preferred presidential candidate. Thereafter, head back home and wait for announcements of results by the Commission.

It will be an assumption for me to say that even if the elections were postponed that the environment will improve. Today is a reality. Tomorrow is a promise. We have decided that reality must take preeminence over promise. If we take care of the realities, the promise will take care of itself. I therefore encourage you all to go out and peaceably exercise your rights and let us take this nation forward together.

God bless you all and God bless Kenya.

W.W. CHEBUKATI
CHAIRMAN