



FAITH BASED ORGANIZATION ON ENHANCING VOTER PARTICIPATION FOR A STRONGER DEMOCRACY

The Inter-Religious Council of Kenya (IRCK) is a coalition of all major faith communities in Kenya. They are Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK), Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC), Seventh Day Adventist (SDA), Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims (SUPKEM), National Muslim Leaders Forum (NAMLEF), Hindu Council of Kenya (HCK) and the Shia Ithnasharia Muslim Association (SHIA). IRCK works together to deepen interfaith dialogue and collaboration among members for a common endeavor to mobilize the unique moral and social resources of religious people and address shared concerns. Each of these Religious Coordinating Bodies (RCBs) has a national coverage with structures that ensure reach at the grassroots level.

Faith Based Organizations (FBO) and institutions possess certain aspects that make them effective in being involved in processes that enhance voter participation, which creates a stronger democracy. Faith leaders are seen as trustworthy and credible, and more often than not, they have shared and respected set of values, which can be leveraged to enhance democracy in Kenya. Due to their grassroots reach, faith leaders have a better and clear understanding of the local context, presence in local communities and local legitimacy. They also have strong networks and at the same time they are a power to reckon with.

Religious Leaders have been involved in enhancing voter participation in Kenya through:

1. Religious Leaders can and have participated in civic education, electoral processes and promotion of peaceful elections. They have collaboratively engaged in intra as well as inter-religious activities that have ensured a stronger democracy was achieved through voter participation.
2. Religious Leaders have advocated for free, fair and credible elections and called upon their congregants to elect credible and leaders of integrity thus encouraging voters to perform their civic duty. These messages have been articulated through different platforms example bulletins, sermons, leaflets, the media, or congregational platforms.
3. Religious Leaders have created platforms, spaces that enabled civic education, debates and election monitoring. They have played a role – often through larger groups – in facilitating, civic education, candidate debates (including televised public debates) and election monitoring.
4. Umbrella religious organizations have taken up initiatives that urged their congregants to exercise their duty for enhanced democracy.
5. Intra- and Inter-faith dialogue and Inter-faith initiatives which Religious Leaders have been engaged in prevention of electoral violence.



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All these involvements by Faith Based Organizations can be better enhanced in partnership with IEBC to ensure that the people of Kenya are able to vote and exercise their democratic right.

Faith Based Organizations in previous years have played a big role in ensuring that voters turn out in large numbers. Therefore, as we approach, the 2022 General Elections Religious Leaders and different faith organizations are ready to be at the forefront to ensure that voters are knowledgeable and turn out to elect leaders of integrity, who can serve the people of Kenya as credible leaders.

Thank you.

Rev. Fr. Joseph Mutie
Chairman, Inter-Religious Council of Kenya (IRCK)

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