

KENYA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS



Our Ref:

Your Ref:

KENYA CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT

Waumini House, Westlands

P.O. Box 13475 - 00800, Nairobi

Tel: +254 020 4443133/4/5, / 4443906,4443917

Fax: +254 020 4442910,4441758

Email: kccb@catholicchurch.or.ke /

secgeneral@catholicchurch.or.ke

Website: www.kccb.or.ke

APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENT OF KENYA NOT TO CLOSE DADAAB AND KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMPS

EXODUS 22: 21: You shall not molest or oppress an alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt.

We, The Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops applaud the Government of Kenya for hosting and giving refugees and asylum-seekers protection over the years. This has been a good gesture to these people who felt they are a lot safer in Kenya. It is not only necessary but also important and human to support the most vulnerable in our society, giving them another chance of having a place they may call home. These are people whose lives have been disrupted by various reasons including mismanagement of resources, bad or lack of good governance structures, immature politics, effects of climate change and generally those who have gone through various types of human rights abuses.

These brothers and sisters of ours living in the camps have become even more vulnerable due to COVID-19 pandemic, which demands certain health measures to be observed in order to stay safe which unfortunately they cannot due to the harsh conditions they live in. We thank God for His merciful love towards them.

We are aware that the two camps host more than 410,000 people including women, children and the elderly. It is highly unfortunate and regrettable that the intention by the Kenyan authorities to close Dadaab and Kakuma Refugee camps within a short timeframe comes at a time that these people need help. This is a time to give protection and embrace the most vulnerable in our society. As a God fearing Nation, we should obey God's commands to love our neighbours. This is the reason why as Kenyans, we should count it a privilege to show that love by hosting the refugees and asylum seekers across the globe.

In this regard, we wish to state the following:

1. Forcefully returning refugees to Somalia, where there is still insecurity and attacks on civilians, will lead to more suffering of many vulnerable women and children. The refugees, under International Law, can be repatriated on voluntary return when conditions change and a free, democratic government

that respects human rights, good governance and the rule of law is in place. This is still not the case in regards to Somalia whose population are the majority hosted in Dabaab camp. The principle of non-refoulement should be respected.

2. The complex refugee situation in Kenya requires a comprehensive approach to solutions which include continued protection of those who are in need of asylum and adequate support for those who may choose to return voluntarily. To facilitate sustainable returns, it is important that the returnees receive the necessary support which includes financial and basic relief items.
3. The Government should continue working with other stakeholders and embrace dialogue towards securing a lasting solution for the common good of refugees.
4. We recommend to the Government to shelve this unfortunate idea and instead increase security and any other support to the refugees as well as to the bodies that work directly with them in ensuring they receive their basic needs.

The Government should reconsider their position and treat all refugees with care and concern especially during this period of Covid-19 pandemic when humanity is faced with serious economic and psychological challenges.

Let us be our brothers and sisters keepers.

Signed by:



Most Rev. Philip Anyolo

CHAIRMAN

KENYA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Dated: 9th April 2021