

# KENYA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS



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**KENYA CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT**

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## I HAVE HEARD MY PEOPLE CRY! (EXODUS 3:7)

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Dear Kenyans, our dear leaders in Government and in Opposition.

We come to you again as your shepherds at this particular time listening to the word of God saying “I have heard the cry of my people” (Exodus 3:7). We invite you to listen to the voice of God now and cease to listen to ourselves.

In the last two weeks, especially with the mayhem and lawlessness we have witnessed, anyone who loves this country has shed tears. We have witnessed just a glimpse of what our country can degenerate into through irresponsible threats and inciting of Kenyans by political leaders, reckless actions by leaders and citizens and gross negligence and mistreatment by the law enforcement agents. Instead of seeking solutions, our political leaders have chosen to escalate hate, revenge and anarchy without care for our country. Both Government and opposition have refused to face the reality, giving lame excuses for their grave wrong actions and each played victim to the Kenyans to win sympathy.

Kenya cannot be allowed to follow this path. It does not matter what conviction you as a leader or a citizen hold, we cannot and must not allow our country to descend into chaos of disorder of a lawless society!

Dear Kenyans, we as your shepherds have seen yet again the fragility of our leadership who seem more interested in their personal gains. Our political leaders are fighting for themselves not for us citizens.

Many people have been hurt, others have lost their lives. People’s property has been destroyed and goods looted. Goons seemed to roam freely. People have lost their

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**INCORPORATING: THE GENERAL SECRETARY’S OFFICE**

1. Commission for Doctrine 2. Commission for Liturgy, 3. Commission for Missions, 4. Commission for Pastoral and Lay Apostolate (Family Life National Office, National Youth Office)  
5. Commission for Inter-Religious Dialogue and Ecumenism (CIRDE), 6. Seminary Episcopal Commission, 7. Commission for Clergy and Religious (Liaison Committee),  
8. Commission for Education and Religious Education (CERE), 9. Commission for Promotion of Integral Human Development-CPIHD (Catholic Justice and Peace Department,  
Catholic Health Department of Kenya, Caritas Department of Kenya, Refugees Migrants and Seafarers Department), 10. Commission for Social Communications, 11. Council for  
Economy (Secretariat for Economy), 12. Ad Hoc Commission for AIDS Relief (KARP), 13. Canon Law National Office

***“You shall be my Witnesses”, (Acts 1:8) for the Sanctification and Salvation of all People.***

livelihoods. Innocent children have found themselves in the middle of the mayhem and suffered injuries. And still more, some places of worship have been set ablaze by arsonists. This fratricidal conflict will have no winner because it can only lead to all of us losing what we truly hold dear. It seems for our leaders, popularity must come at the cost of bloodshed and acrimony, as a competition of who is stronger.

Our dear leaders, and especially the political class; is this what you and the people of Kenya want for our country? We ask our President, His Excellency William Somoei Ruto, in all humility to bend his heart and feel for our country. We ask Hon. Raila Amollo Odinga to hear the cry of many Kenyans including his own supporters who desperately want a peaceful path!

We as the Catholic bishops, with the Kenyan people ask and plead now to our leaders and to Kenyans for the following:

1. We are entering a most sacred time of the Holy Week when Christians commemorate the major events of Christianity. Our Muslim brothers and sisters are also in the Holy Month of Ramadhan. We are greatly disappointed that our ardent plea to our leaders to respect this holy time by suspending demonstrations for RESPECT TO GOD who they claim to give honour has been totally ignored and even mocked. If the reasons moving us to whichever actions are truly Godly, the Week of Christ's death, the Holy Month of Ramadhan would touch our leaders' hearts. Kenyans, must we dishonor God for our own goals? We are therefore asking all Kenyans who are God fearing, including our policemen, on their own personal decision, not to participate in demonstrations this week, and to refrain from all acts of violence or aggression. Let us not mock Christ's sufferings and his death by our actions.

2. We urge all our leaders, specifically our President and Hon. Raila Odinga, and all their advisors, that for the love we have for our country, and for the love and respect of those who have suffered, lost lives, and for the love of God whose places of worship have been desecrated, to stop for a moment, from pushing the conflict any further. This conflict is being driven by the political class. It will never favour the common man.

3. We have asked before for a sitting to listen to one another. We as Catholic Bishops, now demand a truce and suspension of all political demonstrations from the opposition. We also ask for the suspension of celebrative gatherings and prayer meetings organized by Government and political leaders. With the political nuances

witnessed in such gatherings and prayer meetings, we question the intention behind them. Indeed, there will be no good will in pursuing a violent path or a path of revenge by using such gatherings.

4. This Holy time calls for recovery of ethical behaviour, respect, good manners and true statesmanship. We therefore also demand an end of all provocative utterances, personal attacks, political agitation and verbal exchange between leaders in Government and Opposition. It is totally unacceptable by all standards.

5. We also demand an investigation and arrest of goons who were engaged in theft and destruction of property and their sponsors. It is totally unacceptable that we give reign to unruly and unlawful acts of thuggery and celebrate them. The grave negligence on the part of the security forces is truly inexcusable. A public apology is called for!

6. We ask and request that next week, Holy Week, special prayers be organized in all places of worship and even in our communities and families for a lasting solution to the disintegration of the country's hard earned democracy that we are witnessing. As we witness the suffering of Christ, let us examine how we as citizens and especially our leaders are betraying the very truth that he dies for, that is, mercy and forgiveness.

7. Finally, we emphasize that the police must carry out their duty without favour in protecting citizens, safeguarding their property and apprehending people who either break the law or take the law in their hands. There should not be discriminative protection or apparent discriminative negligence.

We desperately need a space of calm in order to find ways to address our issues and avert violent conflict which we already warned our leaders and all Kenyans about. We must not shout at each other but talk; not hate but love and forgive; not fight but listen and find peaceful paths.

Dear Kenyans, we cannot always be lamenting and passing the buck to someone else to solve our problems. We must decide that no leader, whatever his rank or power, will drive us into the pit of hatred and violence. Dear Kenyans, we must decide now or face the consequences of selfish political interests!

Our political class seems empty of ideas to offer to their political parties and groupings. Other sectors besides the political elite must weigh in their views and also make demands for a better management of disagreements and differences. Violence will never be a way to solve our problems.

In all these, our only protection and guarantor of our rights is the Law. It is then paramount that whatever we do as citizens or leaders must first and foremost respect the Law of our land.

We must all understand that selfish politics are destroying our country. At a time when more than 4.1million Kenyans cannot put a meal on the table, we must have our priorities right. Today we should seek to direct all funds to assist our suffering brothers and sisters even if it means just a bit!

All of us Kenyans must remind ourselves that Kenya is our country and the only country we belong to. Attacking each other robs us a chance to live together, work together and prosper together. No one can enjoy peace when a fellow citizen is in pain. We cannot praise nor encourage hooliganism or theft under any circumstances. In conclusion, We the Catholic Bishops, invite all Kenyans to be true judges of what is right and wrong. Wrong is wrong and right is right. We ask our leaders to avoid personal attacks that only harden the radical positions they have taken. Let us all be actively engaged in seeking harmony and peace without losing sight of legitimate concerns that can be channeled soberly so that solutions may be found. We do not solve anything by letting emotions dictate our actions.

The Lord has heard our cry, now let us listen to his voice. May God grant us the wisdom we need to safeguard our Nation. We appeal for ceaseless prayers for a solution! This Holy Week must be a week of Redemption from selfish plans. God bless Kenya.

Signed:



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Most Rev. Martin Kivuva Musonde

**Chairman**

**KENYA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS**

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2023