



JOINT PRESS STATEMENT

A call to EACC and IEBC to raise the integrity bar in the 2022 General elections

9th December 2021

Ladies and gentlemen of the press, we are delighted to welcome you to this press briefing, which comes when the country is grappling with a myriad of issues that warrant our attention. This presser is also timely, coinciding with the International Anti-Corruption Day, a day set aside to commemorate valiant efforts to combat corruption.

This morning, jointly, ICPAK, Amnesty International- Kenya and Transparency International- Kenya, and in exercising our joint mandates of safeguarding the public interest, will be commenting on the following key agendas that have a direct bearing on the citizens and accountability in Kenya:

Elections 2022 are a moment to raise the integrity bar and root out Corrupt leaders

Kenya's score in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) still falls below the Sub-Saharan and global average signifying serious levels of public sector corruption. The 2020 CPI highlighted the relationship between the COVID-19 Pandemic and corruption. Corruption remains one of the greatest concerns for Kenyans and is considered as the single greatest obstacle to economic and social development. Corruption undermines Kenya's capacity to respond to emergencies such as the dual health and economic crises brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The unsustainable raise in Kenya's public debt also resulting from weak accountability structures has seen the country increase its debt to Kshs. 7.7 trillion as at June 2021 equivalent to 69.3 percent of GDP. The poor economic situation notwithstanding, Kenya's leadership has been extensively mentioned in the recently published Pandora Papers Exposé with the President and his family holding foreign bank accounts and real estate worth more than \$30 million. Such foreign investments by those charged with managing the country's economy is immoral and alarming in instances where such accounts are associated with illicit financial flows.

Every year, critical constitutional and independent Offices including the Office of the Auditor General and the Controller of Budget have demonstrated unconstitutionality, impunity and corruption in the wasteful use of public resources at both levels of Government.

The waning levels of integrity demonstrated by the disregard for the rule of law and impunity from a lack of successful prosecutions of people with power accused of corruption continues to decrease public trust in oversight institutions and the country's leadership.

The 2022 general election offers Kenyan's yet another opportunity to use their sovereign power to hold their leadership to account through the ballot. We have a critical role to play in shaping the political agenda and ensuring that Kenyan's constitutional aspiration on Leadership and Integrity is central to the people's agenda in exercising their sovereignty.

To safeguard Kenyan's aspirations on getting leaders with integrity, we call to action the following institutions and the people of Kenya:

- a) Oversight institutions including EACC, DCI, KNEC, should make public all adverse issues touching on integrity for all the political aspirants that seek clearance from their institutions as part of their participation in the upcoming general elections.
- b) Political parties should deny party tickets to any aspirant that does not espouse the values and principles of governance and leadership as provided for in our Constitution.
- c) The IEBC should bar all candidates with unresolved integrity issues from vying in the upcoming general elections having failed to satisfy the moral and ethical requirements by the Constitution for elective positions.
- d) Kenyan voters to reject through the ballot any political candidates who do not espouse the values and principles of governance and integrity as provided for in our shared aspirations under the Constitution of Kenya.
- e) All Kenyans to uphold integrity and require that our leaders live up to the standards we have set out under Chapter Six of our Constitution.

Invest in the software that can alter the corruption menace by ensuring adequate protection of the whistleblower

Corruption has affected the needed transformation in Kenya and Africa. Including sustainable development goals, gender equality, strong public healthcare and education system, food security and even general peace and security efforts. People's actions are core to disrupting the perverse corruption culture. Indeed, the risk of corruption is tremendously increased in environments where the reporting of wrongdoing is not supported or protected. Whistleblowing thus becomes an essential ingredient to encourage reporting of misconduct, collusion, and corruption in all spheres of society.

Despite their critical role in combating corruption, Kenya does not have a dedicated law and policy to provide them with safe, reliable avenues to report fraud, collusion corruption and other wrongdoing. Whistleblowers continue to face targeted attacks that affect their social and economic wellbeing instead of the perpetrators of corruption.

As the world marks the anticorruption day themed 'Your right, your role: Say no to Corruption' it's time we build a culture of encouraging people of all ages and walks of life to speak about corruption in all spaces. This is the only way we guarantee a recovery and transformation of our country after the havoc done by corruption and COVID19 Pandemic.

- a) We call on the parliament to move with speed and fast-track enactment of the Whistleblower Protection Bill 2021 now before the National Assembly as a practical action towards the fight against corruption.

- b) We also call on the government to recognize all known whistleblowers of acts of corruption known in Kenya. Including a posthumous award to Munyakei, an award to John Githongo, Spencer Sankale, as a way of celebrating their courage and bravery in wishing for a better country.

Let's all take part in guaranteeing fair, free, and peaceful 2022 General Elections that don't disrupt social and economic wellbeing.

Nearly all elections have registered a regressed economic growth since 2001. This is because of the uncertainty that comes with poor preparedness and polarization, resulting in unrest and violence. In this regard, we call on:

- a) The IEBC and all actors charged with responsibilities around the elections to communicate their preparedness for the election to grant public confidence in the electoral process and reduce anxiety and uncertainty in the country.
- b) All Kenyans campaign with decorum and civility to reduce voter polarization and any tensions arising from heated campaigns and inciteful utterances.
- c) IEBC, in collaboration with other stakeholders like Election Observation Group (ELOG) and election observers, should consider setting up teams to monitor campaign financing during the 2022 General elections to influence policy and legislative agenda around the implementation of the Campaign Finance Act 2013 post the General elections.
- d) The government to ramp up COVID19 Vaccination exercise. While we applaud the government for the effort in vaccinating the Kenyan population. We call on the government to accelerate access to education and the vaccine to those who need it the most, including people in remote areas where the ballots are still delivered. Additionally, we call for collaboration and support of the private sector, civil society organizations and the public to ensure that as many Kenyans as possible are vaccinated, especially as we begin the campaign season.

Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya CPA Edwin Makori – CEO

Sign: -----

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL- KENYA Mr. Irungu Houghton - Executive Director-

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