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## New Year Wishes from the Chairman's Desk! Looking back and looking Ahead

**A**s the election year closes, it is time to reflect on 2022 and look forward to 2023. This past year was a roller coaster ride with the elections bringing in their own share of ups and downs. However, for the National Cohesion and Integration Commission the year reigned in success, as for the first time in decades Kenya held a peaceful election.

Today, the NCIC is synonymous with peace thanks to Kenyans who heeded the message of peace and came out in large numbers to vote in the August 9th polls. With this success we managed to create a tradition which set pace for future electoral processes.

Kenyans stand testimonial to our efforts and claims. Our mission and vision for a just and equitable society living in peace, unity and dignity, are our biggest strength. We achieved quite a number of land marks last year and we set new targets and goals for this Year.

The New Year brings in an even bigger challenge. We have envisaged a strategic plan dubbed Amani Kwa Ground which will be possible only with everyone's contribution, zeal, commitment and dedication. I am very positive and hopeful that the NCIC will continue to deliver to Kenyans in a great way.

Thanks to each one of you, whatever your responsibility; however great or small, we share a love for this institution and Kenya.

Along with all the new hopes and promises that the New Year will bring, it also brings us a lot more opportunities to work together.

Wishing everybody a peaceful, happy, healthy and successful 2023.



REV. DR. SAMUEL KOBIA – CHAIRMAN NCIC.



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## Elections Bila Noma- The 2022 Kenyan Experience Launch

The year 2022 Kenyan elections shall go down in history as one of the most peaceful elections Kenya has ever had.

Following the August 9th polls the National Cohesion and Integration Commission registered a generally peaceful state during and after elections compared to previous elections. In this regard, the commission alongside its development partners launched the Elections Bila Noma- The 2022 Kenyan Experience' report on 6th Dec 2022, a document developed with the overarching goal of assessing the state of peace and cohesion post august 2022 elections.

Speaking during the occasion, the Cabinet secretary for interior Prof. Kithure Kindiki who was represented by Mr. Moffat Kangi lauded the commission for delivering on its mandate as well as building on the gains for the future. In his words, "I would like to congratulate the NCIC for coming up with an elaborate roadmap to violence free elections that not only provided leadership to the country but also transformed the peace and cohesion sphere in the country."

He further echoed government's commitment to serve Kenyans equally, pleading with those that lost the election to join in for sustainable peace and development. He urged the commission to prioritize healing and reconciliation across the country.

His remarks were reiterated by the NCIC chairman Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia CBS and Royal Danish Embassy Ambassador H.E Ole Thonke, who both noted with satisfaction that the commission's efforts through the Elections Bila Noma Roadmap had borne fruits.

"The year 2022 Kenyan elections shall go down in history as one of the most peaceful elections Kenya has ever had. The nation has clearly learned many lessons from the past and is now in space of peace during the elections," remarked Dr. Kobia.



NCIC Chairman Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia and Commissioners during the launch of the Post-Election Peace Assessment Report on 6th Dec 2022 in Nairobi.

The event, which took place at Radisson Blu Hotel Nairobi, also saw the launch of the "Deepening Peace and Cohesion in Kenya" plan dubbed "Amani Kwa Ground, a project aimed at building on the gains on the commissions Elections Bila Noma Roadmap which was the strategic direction for delivering the country a violence free election.

The forum, characterized by compulsive speeches from different speakers covered a wide range of topics, which stressed on the need to build on the existing peace, bridging ethnic divides and enhance grassroots engagement and community voices in the electoral process while promoting peace and cohesion.



NCIC Chairman Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia addresses the gathering during the official launch of the Post-Election Peace Assessment Report on 6th Dec 2022 in Nairobi.



The event also brought together other guests including the Chairperson Senate committee on National Cohesion, Equal Opportunity and regional Integration Hon. Sen. Mohammed Chute, Sweden envoy to Kenya H.E Amb. Caroline Vicini UNDP Deputy Resident Representative Ms. Mandisa Mashologu, Development partners, NCIC commissioners amongst other dignitaries.

## NCIC & INTERPEACE PEACE AND SECURITY STAKEHOLDER MEETING FOR RIFT VALLEY AND EASTERN REGIONS.

Over the years, cattle rustling, inter-communal and ethnic conflicts, resource based conflicts as well as developmental issues have been witnessed as key drivers to conflict in the Rift Valley and Eastern regions. Violence in the North Rift and Upper Eastern regions continue to persist despite the Government's efforts to quell the conflicts. Interventions by State and Non-State actors have not yielded to sustained peace. The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) in partnership with Interpeace convened a meeting with peace and security stakeholders from the two conflict-prone regions to establish new and innovative solutions of attaining sustainable peace. The meeting was held on 20th December 2022 in Nakuru County, attended by NCIC Commissioners Hon. Farah Abdulaziz, Dr. Danvas Makori, Rift Valley Regional Commissioner Maalim Mohamed, Eastern Regional Commissioner Evans Achoki, County Commissioners and members of the County security teams.



*NCIC Commissioners with Regional Commissioners, County Commissioners & County Security Teams from Rift Valley and Eastern Regions.*

NCIC Commissioner Hon. Farah Abdulaziz said "Peace & Security is a shared responsibility of Government Agencies, Wananchi, Politicians, Civil Society, Executive, Judiciary and Legislature. We must therefore come together and direct a solution to peace and security in this country."

"After the 2022 peaceful General Elections, we need to deepen peace in Counties as peace & security actors. The future of our country is in the Northern Region, we cannot move forward if we do not have peace in the region and we are committed to achieving this." NCIC Commissioner Dr. Danvas Makori reiterated.

Interpeace Country Representative, Hassan Ismail presented work done by Interpeace in collaboration with the Commission in Counties present during the meeting so as to review the peace, cohesion and security status, provide a platform for experience sharing and facilitate joint planning within conflict systems. He said, "There are many partners who are ready and willing to help in attaining and maintaining peace and security in our country. The communities are willing to openly identify criminals and share information."

Disarmament and security, management and training of National Police Reservists (NPRs) and the development agenda include some of the challenges presented as impediments to achieving sustainable peace in the North Rift and Eastern Regions. A strategic and harmonized disarmament process, proper supervision and coordinated structures for NPRs, deliberate and affirmative action on the development agenda (blueprint) were recommended as a way forward.

Rift Valley Regional Commissioner, Mohamed Maalim called on Kenyans and security teams to remain extra vigilant to maintain peace and security, to be proactive and form councils of elders to rebuild our societal values. In the six volatile Counties in the North Rift Region, we have reported many cases of banditry but have been able to repulse many attempts and recover stolen livestock." "We have witnessed support from the leadership of National and County Governments, especially on training of National Police Reservists," he said.

"The Government's role is to protect citizens. We must end rampant insecurities in our areas of jurisdiction. We need to reflect on our strategies to smoke out the perpetrators." Eastern Regional Commissioner, Evans Achoki said.

"Let us work together in inter-agency and strategic partnerships to develop a blueprint for the development of the North Rift and Eastern Regions for sustainable peace." NCIC Deputy Director, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Liban Guyo.

The challenges and recommendations proffered by the security participants of Elgeyo Marakwet, Turkana, Baringo, West Pokot, Samburu, Marsabit, Isiolo and Laikipia Counties are groundwork for sustained peace in the eight counties. To achieve this, it will take deliberate and concerted efforts of state, non-state and community actors to realize the elusive peace of the regions.



*NCIC & Interpeace Peace and Security Meeting for Rift Valley and Eastern Regions in Nakuru*



## 95th EDITION OF THE NATIONAL MUSIC AND CULTURAL FESTIVALS IN KITUI COUNTY

**T**he 95th edition of the National Music and Cultural Festival held in Kitui Multipurpose Institute, Kitui County on 4th Dec 2022, brought together the best of Kenya's diverse culture in pomp and beauty.

The festivals themed, "Embracing Cultural Diversity and Connections in the 21st Century and beyond", brought together more than 25 counties. Hundreds of participants were drawn from different communities to showcase their different cultural artefacts. The NCIC, partnering with Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and National Heritage amongst other stakeholders helped to bring the event together, to achieve its objective to nurture arts and culture, promote cultural diversity as well as promote intercultural integration and peaceful co-existence.

Speaking at the official opening of the annual National festival, the CS, Tourism, Wildlife and National Heritage, Peninah Malonza said that the annual cultural and music festival provides Kenyans with an opportunity to embrace their rich heritage while promoting peace, national values and cohesion amongst the diverse communities.

"The Government will provide necessary policies and framework to ensure culture, an enabler sector, is developed; this will immensely boost the tourism sector which is a massive foreign income earner for our country," the CS underscored.

The Hon. Commissioner NCIC, Dorcas Kedogo graced the gala event which concluded the 2022 National Music and cultural Festival where she urged in her remarks that the ministry to continue to spearhead cohesion for harmonious co-existence through promoting cultural diversity in the cultural festival.

She added that the National Cohesion and Integration Commission will endeavor to support the annual national music and cultural festival in future. The commissioner implored Kenyans to take pride and recognize the role played by culture in uniting Kenyan People.



Pokot traditional dancers showcase a cultural dance during the 95th edition of the national music and cultural festivals in Kitui County



NCIC Commissioner Hon. Dorcas Kedogo presents an award during the 95th edition of the National music and cultural festivals in Kitui County



## AMANI CLUBS SENSITIZATION IN MACHAKOS SCHOOL

**T**he National Goals of Education in Kenya emphasize on the promotion of national unity, sound moral and religious values, individual development and fulfillment, respect and appreciation of diversity. They also seek to promote social equality and responsibility and respect for and development of Kenya's rich and varied cultures. These clearly demonstrate the role of education in building a just and cohesive society. The Commission in partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has been spearheading for the establishment of the Peace (Amani) Clubs, in educational institutions. The overall goal of these clubs is to promote good relations, harmony and peaceful co-existence amongst students themselves and between schools and their neighboring communities.

It is for this reason that the Commission – on 25th October 2022 - visited Machakos boy's National school to conduct a sensitization on how the students can make use of Amani Club in peaceful conflict resolution. The School has a population of more than two thousand, one hundred students, with members of the teaching staff numbering more than ninety. The School has a very vibrant Amani Club.



Nairobi County Amani Clubs Induction for patrons at the NCIC headquarters on 12th November 2022.

During the forum, over 2,000 students and staff in Machakos School were sensitized and they all agreed to be ambassadors of peace within their institution and outside.

In Mashuru Sub-county of Kajiado County, Strengthened relations between NCIC and Ministry of Education were established as well as a commitment to strengthen Amani Club in the region.

On 12th November 2022, the Commission inducted Nairobi Amani Club patrons. The patrons were trained on peacebuilding and conflict management in schools through effective teacher-student engagement and a work plan was developed for Amani Club activities in the County.



## JOURNALISTS, REPORTERS AND BLOGGERS SENSITIZATION FORUM ON HATE SPEECH, ETHNIC CONTEMPT AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE.

**T**he media has a critical role to play in ensuring conflict-sensitive reporting to enhance peaceful coexistence even as the country yearns for a united and cohesive nation. The Commission therefore organized for a sensitization forum with participants being journalists and reporters from various media houses of both community and national vernacular radio stations as well as bloggers. The key agenda of the forum was to enlighten the participants on the offences of hate speech, ethnic contempt and the importance of peaceful co-existence in Kisumu County.



*Participants during Sensitization Forum for journalists, reporters and bloggers in Kisumu County on 8th December 2022*

This two-day sensitization forum was important as it had only been three months since the country went into the polls, and was left deeply divided with a section of Kenyans, especially in the opposition backyards experiencing a wave of negative peace.

Spearheading the forum was Commissioner Hon. Eng. Philip Okundi, Director of Research and Knowledge Management Millicent Okatch and Deputy Director Corporate Communications Olive Metet who were keen to answer questions raised by participants who came out in large numbers for the two days forum.

The commissioner urged participants to move forward and avoid conflicts as this will only drag the country behind in terms of development and matters peace. "Elections will come and go but your neighbor will still remain your neighbor," advised the Commissioner.



*NCIC Commissioner Hon. Eng. Philip Okundi during the Sensitization Forum for bloggers and reporters in Kisumu County on 8th December 2022.*

Among the participants was Mr. Abraham Kipsang' who was representing the Media Council of Kenya (MCK). Mr. Kipsang' gave a comprehensive presentation on sensitive conflict reporting. He defined the meaning of conflict as a situation where two or more individuals or groups try to pursue goals or ambitions which they believe they cannot share. He also pointed out the main causes of conflicts in the society to include: lack of communication, poverty, unequal distribution of resources or scarcity of resources, unequal distribution of power and unresolved grievances.

Mr. Kipsang' also urged the participants to employ the components of conflict sensitivity while reporting. This include applying conflict analysis and searching for new voices and new ideas about the conflict, looking closely at all sides and reporting on how other conflicts were resolved, taking no sides and being engaged in the search for solutions, choosing words carefully and also editors and reporters to make choices of what to report and how to report with emphasis on non-violent behavior.

He concluded his presentation by urging the participants to make use of conflict sensitive reporting since the media plays a vital role in maintaining peace and cohesion in the country.



*Abraham Kipsang' of Media Council of Kenya during the Kisumu County Sensitization forum for Reporters and bloggers.*

It was also noted that people tremendously depend on the media for information. "Good Communication is the only key to non-violent conflict resolution," Abraham Kipsang' MCK.

The participants were also taken through the post-election assessment report analysis by NCIC's Principal Programmes Officer Jescah Otieno and Director Millicent Okatch who gave the overview of the report which was officially launched on Tuesday 6th December, 2022. It was noted that the launch of the report was a milestone for NCIC since it was the first post-election report to be launched after general elections. This included the objectives of the report, the people who participated in the research and the findings thereof. One of the major findings of the post-election assessment report was that 85% of the participants of the research agreed that the NCIC's slogan "Election Bila Noma" influenced peaceful elections.

Moreover, the Director noted that the Commission shall embark on a post-election healing process across the country following the launch of the 'Elections Bila Noma 2022'.

The participants applauded NCIC for the good work they did in ensuring peaceful elections in the August, 2022 General Elections. They noted that all had been addressed in the Post-Election Assessment Report. Participants' other concern was the question of whether NCIC has a tooth to bite.

This was elaborated by Madam Millicent where she said NCIC as a commission works within its mandate which is provided in the NCI Act



*Director Research and Knowledge Management, Ms. Millicent Okatch makes a presentation during the sensitization forum for reporters and bloggers in Kisumu.*

"We applaud the country for keeping peace during the elections. However, we are cognizant of the existence of negative peace across the country and the call on all stakeholders to walk with us in the pursuit for Peace," Ms. Jescah Otieno.



*Ms. Jescah Otieno, NCIC Principal Programmes Officer, presents during the sensitization forum.*

Deputy Director Corporate Communication Olive Metet also gave a glimpse presentation of the six-pointer strategy by NCIC dubbed 'Deepening Peace and Cohesion in Kenya' which is aimed at helping the country move forward after the elections.





*Deputy Director Corporate Communications, NCIC Ms. Olive Metet makes her presentation during the sensitization forum for bloggers, reporters and journalists in Kisumu County.*

The two-day forum concluded on a high note with participants vowing to prioritize sensitive reporting through employing the components of conflict sensitivity while reporting.

## The Nexus between Mental Health and Peacebuilding

**R**esearch has shown a linkage of unhealed trauma and communities embroiled in a vicious cycle of violence. Mental health and supportive services have historically been absent from peacebuilding, reconciliation and development practices.

Marginalizing and/or negating the relevance of mental health as integral to peacebuilding has compounded experiences of chronic stress, trauma and other psychosomatic disruptions for individuals and groups exposed to the invisible wounds of war, violence and conflict.

compounded experiences of chronic stress, trauma and other psychosomatic disruptions for individuals and groups exposed to the invisible wounds of war, violence and conflict.

In this regard, a team from the Commission attended a three-day Co-creation workshop in Diani, Kwale County that was attended by both peacebuilding and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) practitioners. Participants at the workshop were drawn from Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, South Sudan and Kenya.

The agenda of the workshop was for creation and integration of mental health in the peacebuilding sphere. During the workshop, participants explored MHPSS and peacebuilding as a field of study. Participants also explored the development of a trauma healing framework that is aligned with National Reconciliation Framework (NRF).

Participants at the workshop were drawn from Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, South Sudan and also Kenya. By conclusion of the workshop, the participants from various countries were able to agree on key action points and focus areas in relation to MHPSS and peacebuilding.

The Kenyan team agreed and formed a working committee that would spearhead the work of developing a national framework that would integrate MHPSS and peacebuilding. The framework would address the gaps and proffer interventions needed to deliver mental health services that would eventually contribute to peacebuilding in conflict and post-conflict countries.



*IC team led by Commissioner Dr. Danvas Makori during the courtesy call to the Finnish Embassy where they discussed areas of partnership in support towards implementation of peace building programs that integrate trauma healing, mental health and psychosocial support.*

## THE KITUI COUNTY PEACE DIALOGUE.

**F**ollowing a meeting between the Senate Standing Committee on National Cohesion, Equal Opportunity, and Regional Integration officers led by the chairman and the National Cohesion and Integration Commission staff and Commissioners on 9th November 2022, a resolution to engage the afflicted members of the community in a peace dialogue forum in Kitui County was arrived at.

This came after a conflict between camel herders and farmers that has been witnessed since independence and a boom that was witnessed beyond the 2022 General Elections, accompanied by a severe drought affecting animals throughout the country.

Therefore, camel herders were forced to trek long distances in search of pasture for their animals. Kitui County has large tracks of uncultivated land and forests, the nomadic community therefore settled there with their animals. However, the resident community which is comprised of farmers has never been fully receptive to the nomadic community.

The former community is against the latter invading their land as they claim damage to farm produce. This rift causes loss of life as the resident community claims that the visitors have crude weapons like guns unlike them, who defend themselves with sticks, bows, and arrows, weapons that do not match in power. Acknowledging the existence of the conflict, the 9th November 2022 meeting resolved to have the NCIC and the Committee visit the grassroots for a peace dialogue forum after a fact-finding report was presented to them.



*NCIC Deputy Director, legal, Mr. Kyalo Mwangi and Kitui County Commissioner, Mr. Erastus Mbui addressing Kitui residents during the Peace Dialogue Forums.*

The afflicted areas are the Mutha ward of Kitui South, Endau/Malalani ward of Kitui East, Ngomeni and Tseikuru wards of Mwingi North, all in Kitui County. The Peace Dialogue Forums began on 6th through 9th December 2022 in the above-mentioned areas. It comprised of the youth, women, clergy, nyumba Kumi leaders, district peace committee members, local leaders, and the administration comprising of area chiefs all through to the County Commissioner.

The Chairman, senate standing committee on National Cohesion, Equal Opportunity, and Regional Integration Hon. Mohammed Said Chute, who is also the Marsabit County Senator, Hon. James Lemnanon Turkana County Senator and a member of the committee, and Nominated senator Hon. Beth Syengo, a member of the committee and a resident of Kitui County attended the peace dialogue forums.





*Hon. Mohammed Said Chute and Hon. James Lomenen during the Kitui Dialogue Forum*

The locals were very agitated by the camel herders feeding on their farms as they claimed that they do not border the Somali community. They were categorical that they do not have a problem with their Tana River County neighbors and were ready to trade with them. They were also ready to engage with the Somali community on matters of trade but not on the issue of grazing areas.



*A resident of Kitui and Hon. Beth Syengo during a public participation session in Mwingi, Kitui County.*

The KWS officials present were urged to evacuate any intruder on the South Kitui Game Reserve and let the government takeover. They also urged the NCIC staff to have more barazas involving both communities so as to have both communities agree on a way forward. The community was very pleased to have such an event organized and was ready to have the conflict settled for the purposes of development in their land.



## BUSIA SENSITISATION FORUM

**E**fforts to broker peace within counties after elections kicked off on a high note as NCIC advanced its mission through community dialogue forums aimed at sensitizing stakeholders towards the promotion of post elections peace & cohesion.

The forum, incorporated participants drawn from peace structures within the county; Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs, Peace committee members and Nyumba Kumi.



*Security actors during a sensitization forum in Busia County*

Speaking during the forum, Busia County Commissioner Mr Ruto Kipchumba lauded the NCIC for working tirelessly during the electioneering period by engaging the public on importance of living in a cohesive society.

“It’s a good feeling that most of us have moved on and remained peaceful after the elections,” said the commissioner.

Following the rising incidences of media misinformation, disinformation, social media incitement and hate speech, NCIC also sensitized journalists, bloggers and reporters, national and local media stations on fair and conflict-sensitive reporting in the County.



*NCIC Deputy Director kilian nyambu conducting the training of journalists and bloggers in Busia County.*

speaking during the workshop, NCIC Commissioner Hon. Dorcas Kedogo urged the media and online bloggers to embrace fair reporting and balanced news.

She further urged the journalists to deny politicians a platform for incitement.



*Commissioner Hon Dorcas Kedogo addressing the press alongside the County Commissioner Mr Ruto Kipchumba*

It was observed that there was a gap in media inclusion and participation in peace and cohesion processes.

Partners from the Communication Authority of Kenya as well as the Media Council of Kenya resolved to increase media participation in spreading awareness and inclusion in conflict solution processes.



## **SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM THE NCIC CHAIRMAN – Rev. Dr. SAMUEL KOBIA**

On the occasion of the Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ many of us look forward to a time when the bonds that tie us to our loved ones are refreshed and renewed. For others it's a moment of reflections and gift exchange as we make effort to be of good cheer.

This year, the tradition is made more exceptional by the many Kenyans who came out in large numbers and voted for peace in the August 9th polls. The goodwill of Kenyans to reign an environment of peace and cohesiveness before, during and after the elections is a great milestone that cannot go unnoticed.

However, this year's holiday celebrations are made even more poignant by the persons who are still experiencing the decapitating effects of drought and famine; and tremendous loss of life in northern Kenya and other parts of the country. I urge all Kenyans to make sure our fellow countrymen in the affected regions know that they are not forgotten, and to make a special effort towards sharing and committing to charitable works.

During this holiday season my prayer is that we hold true to the real message of Christmas and recognize the value of the often overlooked small blessing in our lives. Here at NCIC, we make every effort to encapsulate and enrich the joyous spirit of the season not only for each other, but also for all Kenyans.

I pray that you enjoy a very merry Christmas and a happy, peaceful New Year.





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