



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE NATIONAL COHESION AND  
INTEGRATION COMMISSION'S CHAIRMAN, REV. DR.  
SAMUEL KOBIA, DURING THE POST 2022 ELECTIONS  
REFLECTIONS ON REGULATIONS AND PRACTICES TO  
ADDRESS ONLINE HARMFUL CONTENT IN KENYA**

5<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2022 AT THE SAROVA PANAFRIC HOTEL KENYA

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**Your Excellency Ms. Henriette Geiger: EU Ambassador to  
Kenya**

**Professor Hubert Gijzen: Regional Director and  
Representative, UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa**

**Distinguished Guests**

**Invited Guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

**Good Morning**

1. It is my great pleasure to join you this morning on this significant occasion that convenes key peace actors to reflect on regulations and practices to address online harmful content in Kenya in the concluded General Elections. Indeed, I am delighted that the Social Media for Peace Campaign bore positives fruits of attaining peace

amidst the many challenges in the elections. I take this opportunity to thank you as our key partners who worked with us to deliver peaceful elections. I also wish to extend our gratitude to my fellow Kenyans for heeding to our call for ***Elections Bila Noma***. I am also aware that you are launching a report that details recommendations on online hate speech management. It is significant that you have included in the report the lessons learnt at a time when our country is progressing in her democracy. We welcome the recommendations in this report and as a major consumer of this report the Commission is looking forward to their implementation.

2. As you may have witnessed, the Social Media platforms remained awash with hate speech and ethnic contempt before, during and after the elections. NCIC observed 500 cases of disinformation, misinformation and mal-information. We flagged out a total of 45 incidences of potential incitement and hate speech between 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> August 2022. These are under cyber forensic investigations. Twitter recorded the highest number of having 22 incidences followed by Facebook with 17 incidences while 3 incidences were identified from both WhatsApp and TikTok.
3. Unlike previous years, the Commission noted a paradigm shift in online conversations. There was a new way of propagating disinformation and misinformation. Thus;

- ❖ **Streaming incitement through video propaganda and false caption:** The continued use of videos containing misinformation/ propaganda/ hate speech content on social media platforms such as Tiktok were widely circulated. The videos were designed to spread false information against political candidates in an effort to dissuade the public from voting in their favour.
  
- ❖ **Misogyny and Gender Slurs:** In a study done in 2019 it was established that women politicians are three times more likely than their male counterparts to experience sexual abuse online. Some of the women aspirants in Kenya were subjected to gender slurs and misogynistic comments which were used to justify their inability to win the election.
  
- ❖ **Tribal Betrayal and Tribal Allegiance:** Tribal betrayal and tribal allegiance have been used as a tactic to propagate incitement along tribal lines. More often, this tactic has been used to show betrayal from Kenya's election provisional results that certain regions dominated by certain ethnic tribes did not vote for a particular candidate. We are concern about the use of this tactic because it brings the risk of ethnic profiling in the case of post-electoral violence which is mostly from electoral disputes.

❖ **Use of online threats by supporters of different political divides:** We continued observing posts that are inciting and others that contain threats to different political divides with an aim to polarize the public ahead of the official release of the presidential elections.

❖ **Ethnic incitement:** Use of hate speech to polarize the public into ethnic lines was continually used. We observed posts with groundless claims of 'grudge' targeting one community for supporting their preferred presidential candidate.

4. Notwithstanding the above tactics, we intensified our monitoring of the digital spaces. Thus through the support of the UNDP we established a robust Early warning and Early Response team that enabled us observe major social media platforms. In addition, the support facilitated meetings between NCIC and all the major tech companies to sensitize them on hate speech and ethnic contempt in the Kenyan Context.

5. Through the multi- agency partnership we were able to flag out social media groups and share critical information regarding hate speech and ethnic contempt while taking necessary action to ensure that the content was not propagated to cause more harm in the Country. Further,

the accounts that were being recreated after take down were flagged out and are under various stages of investigations.

6. To counter negative narrative online, the Commission undertook an intensive integrated media campaign. Among other key strategies, we were able to work with the social media influencers on topical issues to dispel misinformation as well as disinformation. As a result, it changed the negative discourse while upholding and entrenching the **Elections Bila Noma campaign.**

7. The Commission also drafted and launched the **National Action Plan on Hate speech as well as the Hatelex: A Lexicon of hate speech terms in Kenya.** This not only acted, as a deterrence of hate speech but it also enhanced a coordinated way of managing hate speech both in public and digital space.

8. In order to enhance accountability and responsibility by both the Kenyans Citizens and Political class, the Commission spearheaded the development of the Political Decency and Peace Charter. The Charter acted as a binding document that held the four presidential candidates and leaders of political parties responsible for their utterances and actions both in the digital and public spaces before, during and after the elections.

9. Through our social media monitoring we established that youth are mostly used to propagate disinformation and

misinformation. Consequently, NCIC developed training and sensitization model targeting the youth on the best practice and ethics in using social media platforms.

10. We are continuing to monitor social media platforms given that this is a dynamic field that is affected by emerging innovations. Therefore the recommendations that have been proffered in the report that will be shared this morning will be useful in ensuring that we stay abreast of technological changes in the wake of political disinformation and hate speech.

11. With these few remarks, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to once again congratulate the UNESCO for holding this Reflection forum.

Thank you all, and God bless you!

**REV. DR. SAMUEL KOBIA, CBS**  
**COMMISSION CHAIRMAN**