

Joint Statement by Heads of Mission in Kenya on the August 8th General Elections

August 3, 2017

On August 8, Kenyans will exercise one of their most important democratic rights and select their leaders. As international partners, we encourage Kenyans to look beyond their differences to come together to ensure free, fair, credible, and peaceful elections. A successful poll will secure the extraordinary promise of the 2010 Constitution, strengthen democracy, and advance prosperity for all Kenyans.

As fellow democracies, we believe democracy is the best form of government, but we know too that it requires determination and commitment. In our experience, successful elections require everyone from all parts of society to work together.

We commend the IEBC for its preparations for the elections. We urge all Kenyans to give the IEBC the space to fulfil its vital role. It is essential that IEBC staff be safe from harassment or attack, and we welcome the Government of Kenya's commitment to provide them with additional security.

Leaders and politicians have a responsibility to reject violence and hate speech, and to urge their followers to do the same. Candidates running for office, whether they win or lose, should be prepared to welcome the decision of the people with grace and humility. All sides should respect judicial independence and be prepared to resolve any disputes over the polls peacefully through the courts and not violently in the streets.

We urge all registered Kenyans to vote on Election Day. Everyone should feel and be safe, under the protection of security services that guard citizens' rights and remain politically neutral. Political competition should never turn into bloodshed, and no one should die because of an election.

Effective democracies depend not just on government agencies, but also on a free media and an active civil society. It is important they have the freedom to carry out their roles of informing the public, promoting transparency, and debunking and rejecting false or inflammatory reports.

As partners, we do not support any particular candidate or party. Rather, we support the democratic process and Kenyans' right to choose their representatives and their future. The choice of Kenya's next leaders belongs to Kenyans alone.

The August 8 elections are an opportunity for Kenya to build a remarkable future, inspire Africa, expand freedom, and strengthen national unity. We stand with all Kenyans working for credible and peaceful elections.

Signed by the following Heads of Mission in Kenya:

Robert F. Godec
Ambassador of the United States

Nic Hailey
High Commissioner for the United Kingdom

Stefano A. Dejak
Ambassador of the European Union

Victor Conrad Rønneberg
Ambassador of Norway

Johan Borgstam
Ambassador of Sweden

Frans Makken
Ambassador of the Netherlands

Antoine Sivan
Ambassador of France

John Feakes
High Commissioner for Australia

Mette Knudsen
Ambassador of Denmark

Tarja Fernández
Ambassador of Finland

Ralf Heckner
Ambassador of Switzerland

Sara Hradecky
High Commissioner for Canada

Jutta Frasch
Ambassador of Germany

Mauro Massoni
Ambassador of Italy

Dr. Harald Günther
Ambassador of Austria

Julia Pataki
Ambassador of Romania

Javier García de Viedma Bernaldo de Quirós
Ambassador of Spain

Dr. Vincent O'Neill
Ambassador of Ireland

Pavel Rezac
Ambassador of the Czech Republic

Luisa Fragoso
Chargé d'Affaires of Portugal

Sergiusz Wolwski
Chargé d'Affaires a.i., Poland

Hilde Van Inthoudt
Chargé d'Affaires a.i., Belgium

#