

Inter-Religious Council of Uganda



Religions for Peace

STATEMENT OF THE IRCU REGARDING THE KITEEZI GARBAGE LANDFILL COLLAPSE

**DELIVERED BY HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN JERONYMOS
MUZEEYI, ARCHBISHOP UGANDA ORTHODOX CHURCH AND
CO-CHAIR IRCU COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS**

**DURING THE COMPASSIONATE, SOLIDARITY AND
MEMORIAL PRAYERS HELD AT KITEEZI HOLDING CAMP,
KITEEZI CHURCH OF UGANDA PRIMARY SCHOOL, KAMPALA**

MONDAY, 19TH AUGUST, 2024

The Chairperson and Members of the IRCU Council of Presidents;

The Chairperson and members, IRCU Board;

Esteemed religious leaders;

Representatives from Government, and the local authorities;

The humanitarian agencies here present;

Members of the Kiteezi community.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

The Inter-Religious Council of Uganda with deep sorrow learnt about the tragedy of the Kiteezi dump-site landfill/collapse, which has resulted in an enormous loss of lives and property of residents along the dumpsite.

It has been reported that at over 34 people have died, 56 homes have been destroyed and almost 1,000 people from the villages of Lusanja, Kitetikka and Kiteezi have been displaced, affected and even many more are feared dead.

We express our gratitude to Government and humanitarian agencies like the Uganda Red Cross Society for the immediate response, especially in evacuation of victims from the danger zones and calamity affected areas to a safer zone.

We thank Government, especially His Excellency the President and the Right Honorable Prime Minister for offering financial support to victims that have lost relatives and property in this calamity.

We extend appreciation to the religious fraternity, communities and the local authorities for the prompt response to save lives and property before the rescue teams were dispatched. We thank the organizations and individuals that have responded and provided essential basic support to the affected persons so as to enable quicker recovery and restoration. We specifically thank the Parish Priest of Kiteezi, and All Saints Cathedral - Church of Uganda for providing space to host the affected families.

We commend the security forces for the prompt response and for keeping order and providing security to the campsite hosting the affected families.

As the religious fraternity in the country, we share and feel the pains of the victims, especially those who have lost family members, lost property and their entire livelihoods under circumstances that could have been prevented. It is our earnest prayer that God will grant you the grace and fortitude to cope with this tragedy as a family, community and as a country.

Scripture in **Joel 2:25** reminds us that, God is the God of restoration. It is our prayer that God will restore what has been lost in a greater measure.

The Government is mandated under the Constitution to protect the right to life and life itself and the citizens' property. The right to livelihood, a descent home, clean, healthy, and safe environment are all connected to the right to life. Therefore, taking cognizance of the total number of people and properties lost, IRCU recommends the following measures be taken in order to guard against such occurrences:

1. Government should often act promptly to the advice and warnings by technical and professional personnel related to projected disasters by regulators such as the National Environmental Authority (NEMA) to avoid such catastrophes. The IRCU noted that guidance was provided to KCCA early enough regarding cessation of usage of Kiteezi dumping site, unfortunately, it was not heeded to.
2. Government structures for social workers, humanitarian organizations, religious and faith-based institutions should provide psycho-social support and

counselling to victims of this disaster for complete healing and restoration.

3. Government should set up a special livelihoods and housing project for the victims to ensure quick economic recovery, and ensure long-term community and household resilience.
4. Government should start on the process of reforming the waste management policy and system to ensure a coordinated approach to organic waste management framework within the country.
5. Government should improve on funding for continuous environmental impact assessment and mitigation and integrate in its planning processes at all levels.

As the religious fraternity under IRCU, we are committed to ensuring that the Kiteezi disaster victims are supported using our different structures, particularly by ensuring access to both human, material and other financial resources through lobbying for public donations, providing volunteers where need be, providing medical assortments and food while contributing to disaster response and recovery.

Finally, we wish to appeal to the responsible authorities and members of the communities to always abide by the policies, guidance and warnings so as to avoid occurrences of such disasters and to save lives and property.

May God bless you all and thank you for welcoming us to Kiteezi.

In God's Service!

His Eminence Metropolitan Jeroyntos Muzeyi

Archbishop, Uganda Orthodox Church/

Co-Chair IRCU Council of Presidents

FOR AND ON BEHALF OF THE IRCU COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS