

Inter-Religious Council of Uganda



Religions for Peace

PASTORAL LETTER

**Working Together for Peaceful, Fair,
and Credible 2026 Elections**



Proverbs 21:3

To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than Sacrifice

Surah 5: Al-Ma'idah:8:

O you who have attained to faith! Be ever steadfast in your devotion to God, bearing witness to the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of any one lead you into the sin of deviating from justice. Be just: this is the closest to being God-conscious.

ABOUT IRCU

The Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) is an indigenous, faith-based organization that has been in existence for over 22 years. It delivers its services through religious leaders, established structures, and institutional infrastructure that cascade from the national level to the grassroots.

Among the institutions through which IRCU operates are health facilities, universities, schools, vocational and post-secondary institutions, as well as religious and district-level governance structures. These platforms enable IRCU to reach diverse communities effectively and impactfully.

Its membership comprises established religious institutions that represent a broad spectrum of spiritual leadership in the country. These include Christian denominations such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Province of the Church of Uganda, the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council, the Uganda Orthodox Church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Born-Again Faith and networks of Pentecostal and Evangelical churches in Uganda. Together, these bodies form a unified platform for interfaith engagement and collaboration in Uganda.

IRCU GOVERNANCE

The IRCU Council of Presidents is responsible for general oversight of the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda. It oversees the conduct of business, finances and programmes. Members of the Council of Presidents are the heads of Ordinary member religious institutions -the archbishops. Currently IRCU has seven ordinary member faith institutions.

The IRCU Board is responsible for policy oversight and provision of strategic guidance to the Secretariat. The members of IRCU board consists of faith organisations that constitute the IRCU Council of Presidents who are the secretary generals, and a faith leader, the chairperson of Women of Faith Network's national coordinating committee, the chairperson of the elders' forum, and chairperson of the IRCU Inter-faith youth network. The IRCU Board provides policy guidance and makes recommendations to the Council of Presidents.

The IRCU Secretariat is headed by the Secretary General who is responsible for its administration and implementation of the IRCU programmes. The secretariat is responsible for day to day affairs of IRCU, and performs duties as the Council of Presidents and the Board may direct.

Vision

The IRCU vision is "A divinely peaceful, united, prosperous Uganda where all people enjoy full health and freedoms for the common good."

Mission

The IRCU Mission is "To promote peace, reconciliation, good governance and holistic human development through interfaith action and collaboration, advocating for the empowerment of member bodies for the common good"

PASTORAL LETTER

Working Together for Peaceful, Fair, and Credible 2026 Elections

Fellow Citizens,

We greet you in the Name of God Our Creator and Sustainer!

It is our duty as religious leaders to provide guidance, especially during times when our collective choices may significantly impact our shared life and aspirations. This is particularly vital during the electoral period, when the potential for selfish interests may override sober judgment and threaten our commitment to the common good.

As religious leaders, we recognize our duty to guide the nation toward peace and unity. Religious leadership, much like a tree that provides shade to those seeking refuge, must remain impartial and unwavering in its commitment to moral and ethical governance. In this critical electoral period, we are called upon to uphold the values of fairness, tolerance, and respect for all. Our holy scriptures challenge us to uphold peace and justice in all our affairs. (*Proverbs 21:3 “To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than Sacrifice”*

In Surah 5: Al. Ma'idah:8 “O you who have attained to faith! Be ever steadfast in your devotion to God, bearing witness to the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of any one lead you into the sin of deviating from justice Be just: this is the closest to being God-conscious.”)

The Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) reaffirms its commitment to democratic principles, human rights, and social harmony. However, we note with concern that since the 2021 general elections, the country has been drifting dangerously into identity politics. Voters now appear increasingly inclined to support candidates based on religious, regional, or ethnic identities.

In a country with such diversity, identity politics is a perilous path for electoral democracy. The management of our political and ethnic differences has increasingly adopted a divisive “you versus them” mentality where differences in opinion lead to hostility, and opponents are treated as enemies. This mindset breeds discrimination, brutality, and polarization.

We are especially pained when both perpetrators and victims of such hostility are members of our congregations. This situation stems from unprincipled, self-conceited individuals who pursue politics without an issue-based agenda.

Our Call as Religious Leaders

Over the past months, we have witnessed political activism and actions that are likely to threaten national integration, cohesion and Peaceful Co-existence. The trend the political trajectory is taking could lead into factional politics that portend an unpredictable future for Mother Uganda.

As religious Leaders, we are selflessly duty-bound and subject ourselves to a moral compulsion to call on Ugandans to appreciate and reflect on the realities that have engendered the current political dynamics in Uganda.

As prophet Ezekiel (33:1-9) affirms: *“If you ignore our warning and danger overtakes you, be prepared to bear the consequences of your arrogance and your blood will not be on our heads as we will have played our role.”*

This call is about social justice, progress, tolerance, peace, social morality and universal human dignity. Yet much as we speak to you as shepherds, we are also watchmen. We are also citizens; Children of Mother Uganda.

We therefore implore every Ugandan to use their position to promote values embedded in our Constitution. These include:

1. Promote a Culture of Cooperation and Respect:

We must nurture a culture of cooperation, understanding, tolerance, and respect for each other’s customs, traditions, and beliefs. Elections are temporary events that must not destroy the strong social networks that sustain us through life’s journey.

2. Uphold the Right to Free and Fair Elections:

Elections give citizens the opportunity to express their will and choose how they shall be governed. Participation is a constitutional right. We urge security agencies, Resident District Commissioners, and the Uganda Communications Commission to avoid interference that could hinder the Electoral Commission from fulfilling its role.

The independent Electoral Commission must exercise the independence guaranteed under Article 62 of the 1995 Constitution. It must communicate clearly and consult widely, especially on processes that affect rights and freedoms. Regulations must never be perceived as selective/discriminative or forced.

3. Maintain a Peaceful and Secure Political Environment:

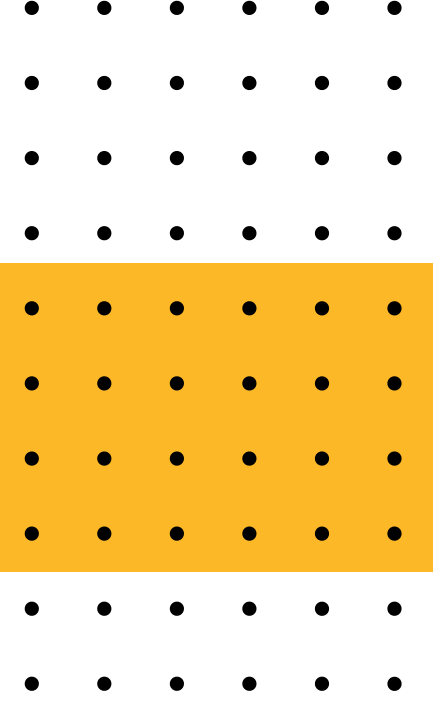
Article 111(v) of the Constitution mandates the State to ensure a peaceful, secure, and stable political environment. Unfortunately, past elections have seen the emergence of informal militia groups and unvetted recruits in security outfits, some of whom have mutilated/ brutally injured innocent citizens.

The Uganda Police Force, constitutionally mandated to maintain law and order, must ensure its officers are properly recruited, trained, and equipped to work impartially in a multiparty political environment. Large deployments of armed personnel during elections may intimidate voters. Deployment strategies should consider their impact on voter turnout and citizen confidence. All enforcement agencies must uphold equality before the law to earn the trust of the public.

4. Support Civic Education and Voter Empowerment:

Civic organizations must remain autonomous and committed to empowering citizens through voter and civic education. We urge these organizations to work hand in hand with the Uganda Human Rights Commission and the Electoral Commission to equip voters with knowledge, so that they can participate meaningfully and confidently in the electoral process.

OUR CALL TO ACTION



As religious leaders, we are aware that the Constitution assigns distinct responsibilities to institutions such as government ministries, security forces, the legislature, and law enforcement agencies. However, during times of competing interests such as elections some actors in these institutions misuse their positions, undermining justice, fairness, and peaceful coexistence.

Cases of chaos and violence in party primaries often spill over into general elections. As neutral beings with especially a kingly, priestly and prophetic role, we are compelled to speak out, not only to protect the democratic process, but also to remind ourselves to maintain our own integrity in interactions with political actors. We have undertaken nationwide sensitization for senior religious leaders to strengthen their position as guardians of justice, peace, and integrity throughout the electoral season.

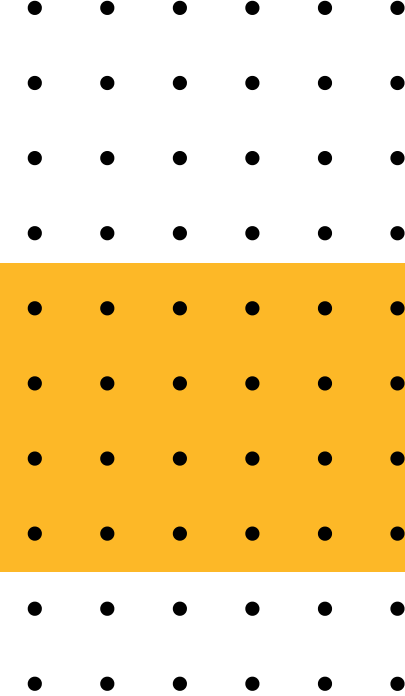
1. Prayer:

Let us pray for our country Uganda, the Leaders and the Electoral process so that we are able to live peaceful and quiet lives especially throughout the electoral period. *(2 chronicles 7:14 “If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn away from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land”. Quran 2:186. “When my servants ask you or prophet about me: I am truly near, I respond to Ones’ prayer when they call upon me, so let them respond with obedience to me and believe in me, perhaps they will be guided to the right way”)*

2. Fair Electoral Process:

As Uganda prepares for Parliamentary, Presidential and other elections, IRCU urges the government to ensure a level playing field. All candidates must be allowed to campaign freely, without fear of harassment or intimidation. *(Deut 16:19 “You shall not pervert justice, you shall not show partiality” Quran 4:135 “Standout firmly for justice as witnesses to Allah”)*

OUR CALL TO ACTION



3. Electoral Transparency:

The Electoral Commission must remain honest and accountable. Transparent electoral processes contribute to the legitimacy of an election. They also set the country on a sound democratic path (*Matt 5:16 “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your father in heaven”*)

4. Security and Human Rights:

We call upon security forces to exercise civility in carrying out their mandate by refraining from human rights and the creation of an environment of fear and uncertainty. Acts such as abductions, brutality, unlawful detentions, and the use of masked agents and unmarked vehicles undermine public trust in law enforcement.

5. Political Ethics and Voter Responsibility:

Citizens should reject voter bribery and stop soliciting money from candidates. This compromises their judgment and in the long run distorts the purpose for elections. When elections become transactional, citizens lose their power to hold their leaders accountable. The leaders elected in such a process gain a sense of entitlement as they would have bought their way into leadership. This affects the quality of leaders, service delivery and perpetuates the cancer of corruption which has stifled the development of the nation. We must all exercise wisdom and discernment in our political choices guided by our moral values of selfless service, integrity and accountability. Do not sell your vote. (*Prov 15:27 “Whoever is greedy for unjust gain troubles his household, but he who hates bribes will live”*)

OUR CALL TO ACTION

6. Electing Leaders with Integrity:

Ugandans are urged to elect competent, educated, ethical, and God-fearing leaders regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, political party, or socio-economic status. *(Deut 1:13 “Choose some wise understanding and respected men from each of your tribes, and I will set them over you.” Quran 49:13 “Indeed the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you”)*

7. Promoting Peaceful Elections:

We must reject lawlessness, hooliganism, and human rights violations. Let us all foster a culture of respect, tolerance, love, and national unity before, during, and after the elections. *(1 Peter 3:8 “Finally all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other, Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tender hearted, and Keep a humble attitude.” Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:2 “And Cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Severe in Penalty”)*

8. Emulate a Spirit of Sportsmanship in Elections:

Elections will produce winners and losers. We call upon all candidates and supporters to accept outcomes with dignity or lawfully challenge the results. Like in games and sports, winners should celebrate responsibly, and losers should concede honorably. *(Rom 12:10 “Be devoted to one another in love. honor one another above yourselves”. Quran 49:10 “The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy.”)*

Conclusion

The Inter-Religious Council of Uganda remains fully committed to peace, ethical leadership, and national unity. As we proceed through the 2026 election cycle, we urge all stakeholder, government agencies, security forces, political leaders, and citizens to uphold democratic values and preserve the dignity of every Ugandan.

We have faith and confidence in you to act diligently and conscientiously during this electoral period. Let us take our civic duties seriously, always guided by our national motto: “For God and My Country.” Let us join hands in praying for our nation and seeking God’s guidance as we cast our votes. We are confident that together we can create a better future for ourselves and future generations. We wish you God’s blessings in all that lies ahead.

For God and Our Country!

Signed for and On Behalf of the Faith Fraternity



**His Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Stephen Samuel
Kaziimba Mugalu**
Archbishop, Province of the Church of Uganda
Chairperson, Council of Presidents



**His Eminence Sheikh Shaban
Ramadhan Mubaje**, Grand Mufti of
Uganda
Co-Chairperson, Council of Presidents



**His Eminence Metropolitan Jeronymos
Muzeeyi**
Archbishop Uganda Orthodox Church
Co-Chairperson, Council of Presidents



Pastor Dr. Moses Maka Ndimukika
President, Seventh-day Adventist Uganda
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Co-Chairperson, Council of Presidents

Signed for and On Behalf of the Faith Fraternity



Rt. Rev. Antony Zziwa
Bishop of Kiyinda-Mityana Diocese
Chairman, Uganda Episcopal Conference
Co-Chairperson, Council of Presidents



Apostle Dr. Joseph Serwadda
Presiding Apostle
Born Again Faith in Uganda
Co-Chairperson, Council of Presidents



Bishop Joshua Lwere
National Overseer
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Religions for Peace



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