


Inter-Religious Council of Uganda



Religions for Peace

PRESS RELEASE

IRCU STATEMENT ON ESCALATING ELECTORAL VIOLENCE

8th December 2025

The Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) has again noted with deep concern the recurring episodes of electoral violence during the ongoing presidential, parliamentary, and local government campaigns.

The most recent incident occurred on **Saturday, December 6, in Gulu City**, where individuals dressed in plain clothes, as well as others in Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) and Uganda Police uniforms, were seen beating supporters of political opposition parties, particularly those belonging to the **National Unity Platform (NUP)**.

Similar disturbing videos have emerged from other parts of the country. In **Sembabule**, for example, men in plain clothes were recorded beating a man and a woman and forcing them onto a double-cabin pickup vehicle, while men in UPDF uniform looked on without intervening.

We have also observed incidents where security forces have used sniffer dogs, batons, tear gas, and even live bullets to disperse supporters of some candidates. Recent violent incidents in Kawempe, Mukono, Buikwe, and elsewhere have led to injuries, arrests, and the tragic loss of one life in Iganga.

These acts of violence are unacceptable, undermine the integrity of the electoral process, and erode public trust in institutions mandated to protect citizens. Elections are a civic exercise that has to be conducted in a peaceful environment.

Violence has no place in a civilized and democratic society. Violence scares voters and risks creating widespread voter apathy. It is especially shameful when officers entrusted with the responsibility of upholding the law are the very ones violating it. The **Anti-Torture Act** explicitly prohibits the beating of any Ugandan, and individual officers who commit acts of torture are liable to punishment under the law. Assaulting citizens simply because they hold different political opinions is primitive, unacceptable, and inconsistent with the conduct of professional security officers. We share His Excellency the President's conviction, that *no security personnel that tortures Ugandans is fit to put on our uniform*.

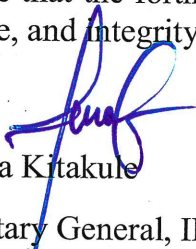
As religious leaders, we categorically say **NO to violence, our country has bled enough.** Election campaigns are not war zones; they are platforms for ideas. Let us talk to one another, listen to one another, and remain peaceful.

The growing trend of disruptions to candidates' campaigns—platforms through which ideas are shared—is rendering the electoral exercise meaningless. Such disruptions defeat the very purpose of election campaigns and set the country on the path of violence. It is within the mandate of the electoral Commission to create an enabling election environment. We therefore urge the Electoral Commission to take a firm stand in addressing these disruptions.

We call on security forces, especially the police, to act with professionalism and restraint. The IRCU, takes seriously these trends. We believe that the peaceful elections we all desire must be translated into in our daily actions and choices.

We reiterate our call for peaceful elections and urge all candidates, political parties and their supporters to adhere to electoral guidelines and to commit themselves publicly and genuinely to a peaceful electoral season.

Uganda's democracy can only thrive when all citizens—regardless of political affiliation—are treated with fairness, dignity, and equality before the law. We urge all stakeholders, especially security agencies, to uphold these principles and ensure that the forthcoming elections are conducted in an atmosphere of peace, justice, and integrity.



Joshua Kitakule

Secretary General, IRCU

For and on behalf of the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda