

Christmas and End-Year Message To The Country

*“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time
we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”*

Galatians 6:9

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَائِي ذِي الْقُرْبَى وَيَنْهَى
الْفَحْشَاءَ وَالْمُنْكَرَ وَالْبَغْيَ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

*“Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids
immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will
be reminded.”*

Quran 16:90

Fellow citizens,

Permit us, on behalf of religious leaders, under the umbrella of the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda, to greet and wish you a merry festive Christmas season as well a Happy New Year 2020.

We salute His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, the Government and the entire Ugandan citizenry for your different, but complementary roles in nation-building.

We also take this opportunity to sincerely thank His Excellency the President for entrusting IRCU with the responsibility to organize End of Year National Thanksgiving prayers at State House Entebbe.

We wish to convey our condolences to all the families that have lost their dear ones due to diseases, accidents, lawlessness and natural calamities in the year 2019. May the Almighty God bless their souls eternally.

As religious leaders, we derive our prophetic voice from our Holy Books (*2 Corinthians 5:20; Surat al-Hujurat 49:2*). That about 98% of Ugandans subscribe to the inter-religious constituency speaks volumes about the scope of influence on the lives of our faith communities. That aside, as bona fide citizens of the Republic of Uganda, we enjoy a constitutional right to make a noble contribution to nation-building.

We earnestly urge all God's people to observe peace and avoid any situations that might jeopardise your lives or the lives of the members of your family. During the festive season thousands of Ugandans travel upcountry or to urban centres to enjoy Christmas season with their relatives. Whilst the spirit of community/family re-union is laudable, we wish to caution the transport sector to ensure the safety of the travellers by observing all traffic regulations and avoiding reckless driving in a bid to maximize profits.

We encourage parents to keep a watchful eye on their children who are currently in their holidays. Without a watchful eye of the parents/guardians, the children could fall easy prey to people with evil intentions in society. With regret, we wish to remind parents/guardians of the immoral activities prevailing in society. These include, among others, sports betting and gambling, drug abuse and addiction, promiscuity, prostitution and nude shows/movies. As responsible parents/guardians, it is your duty to ensure that keep track of the movements of the children in your custody. This is one of the principles of good parenting.

Further, we wish to remind you that the 2021 general elections are around the corner. Are you a registered voter, or a mere supporter? We urge you to exercise your constitutional right by visiting the local authorities to ensure that your name appears on the national voter register. Relatedly, we wish to remind all eligible persons (particularly students currently on holiday who have turned 18 years) to ensure they use the General Update exercise to register themselves if they are to participate in the elections. Voting is a civic responsibility that every citizen aspiring for democracy governance should not gloss over. Most importantly, there is overwhelming need to keep peace before, during and after the elections.

As peace makers (Matthew 5:9), we wish to call upon Ugandans to support the Uganda National Dialogue process that is spearheaded by the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda and The Elders' Forum of Uganda (TEFU). This process has been ongoing for the past three years and is a mechanism build a national consensus to consolidate peace, democracy and inclusive development to achieve equal opportunity for all. It need not be over-stated that our country is rocked into violence either before, during and after elections at all levels.

Therefore, the search for peace is a common denominator of all well-intentioned citizens of Uganda. On a positive note, we wish to thank H.E. President Yoweri Museveni for signing the Uganda National Dialogue communiqué that was launched on 18 December, 2018 at State House. In the same vein, we wish to recognize all the stakeholders that have contributed to the Uganda National Dialogue process.

Once again, we wish you a Merry Christmas and Prosperous New Year 2020.

Signed this 23rd day of December, 2019.

NO	NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
1.	His Eminence Sheikh Shaban Ramadhan Mubaje	Grand Mufti of Uganda, Chairman, IRCU Council of Presidents	
2.	His Grace the Most Rev. Stanley Ntagali	Archbishop, Church of the Province of Uganda, Co-Chair, IRCU Council of Presidents	
3.	His Eminence Metropolitan Jonah Lwanga	Archbishop, Uganda Orthodox Church, Co-Chair, IRCU Council of Presidents	
4.	Pr. Dr. Daniel Matte	President, Seventh-day Adventist Uganda Union, Co-Chair, IRCU Council of Presidents	

5. His Grace Dr. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga Archbishop, Kampala Archdiocese, Co-Chair, IRCU Council of Presidents
6. Apostle Dr. Joseph Serwadda President, Born Again Faith in Uganda Co-Chair, IRCU Council of Presidents
7. Bishop Joshua Lwere General Overseer, National Alliance of Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches in Uganda, Co-Chair, IRCU Council of Presidents
8. Joshua Kitakule Secretary General, IRCU