



**PASTORAL LETTER**

**From the Council of Presidents of the Inter Religious  
Council of Uganda**

**“Guidelines on the prevention and control of the  
spread of COVID-19”**

**June, 2020**

## **ABOUT IRCU**

---

The Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) founded in 2001, is an indigenous, national faith-based organization uniting efforts of religious institutions to jointly address issues of common concern. The member organizations that constitute IRCU are the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of the Province of Uganda, the Uganda Orthodox Church, the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council, Seventh-day Adventist Church in Uganda, the Born Again Faith in Uganda and the National Alliance of Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches in Uganda

IRCU is affiliated to African Council of Religious Leaders (ACRL) and Religions for Peace International (R/P).

IRCU's main focus is on promotion of peace and conflict transformation, sustainable human development and network development among the religious leaders, communities, women and youths. It delivers services through religious leaders, structures and infrastructure which cascade down from national to the grassroots levels.

# PHILOSOPHY AND MANDATE

---

## **Philosophy**

Inspired and motivated by love and faith, IRCU strives to serve God through service to humanity, especially the poor and vulnerable of society Surah Al-Baqarah 17; Mathew 25:34-40; 1 John 4:20.

## **Mandate**

From the philosophy, IRCU derives its mandate as follows:

- a) Building the capacity of FBOs and religious leaders so that they rise up to today's challenges;
- b) Mobilizing resources for addressing the challenges;
- c) Influencing Public Policy Advocacy;
- d) Taking action as an agent of social change and transformation.

## **Vision**

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

## **Mission**

IRCU's 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.”

# CORE VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

---

In advancing its mandate, IRCU is guided by the following values and principles:

## Values

- a) Solidarity,
- b) Justice, Peace and Reconciliation
- c) Ethics and integrity.

## Core Principles

- a) **Representation:**  
The principle of representation recognizes that religious communities, their structures and representatives are respected and duly taken into account in the work of IRCU
- b) **Delegation:**  
The principle of delegation recognizes that while local decisions and actions shall be taken and implemented at the local level, the national decisions and actions shall be taken and implemented at the national level.
- c) **Consistency:**  
The representation of the IRCU member Faith Based Organizations shall be consistent from the highest to the lowest level.
- d) **Subsidiarity:**  
Recognize that local and national decisions and actions can be taken at the respective levels.

## Pastoral letter

### From the Council of Presidents of the Inter Religious Council of Uganda “Guidelines on the prevention and control of the spread of COVID-19”

#### Preamble

Fellow Ugandans,

On 30<sup>th</sup> January, World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a public health emergency of international concern. In the wake of the pandemic, countries embarked on devising strategies to curb the spread of the virus and offering support to their citizens to cushion the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Council wishes to applaud His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda for the timely response and stringent measures put in place to ensure safety of all Ugandans and to restrain the spread of COVID-19. We urge all Ugandans to adhere to these guidelines and directives.

IRCU acknowledges and appreciates the food and non-food items being procured by government, as well as the donation by people of good-will towards the COVID-19 response, but most importantly to support the most vulnerable groups among us. While the Council appreciates this support for Kampala and Wakiso Districts, there are many more vulnerable groups such as the elderly, the sick, lactating mothers, refugees and those living from hand to mouth like taxi touts,

casual laborers, *boda-boda* riders among others who cannot fend for themselves during the lock down throughout the country.

We also acknowledge the economic stimuli packages as outlined by the different government agencies like Bank of Uganda to restructure loan repayment periods and NSSF to defer contribution by employers for three months. Up to-date, the Government has not yet come up with a comprehensive strategy to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

We thank God for Hon. Minister Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng for her leadership and the frontline health workers who are treating and supporting COVID-19 patients. The Council recognizes the enormous health challenges as a country and how much the corona virus has stretched the already struggling health sector. We already know about the shortage of personnel, limited access of supplies such as personal protective equipment, gloves, medical masks, respirators, face shields, gowns, and aprons, in addition to the limited beds for Intensive Care Units (ICUs), and indeed, facilitating the designated quarantine centres throughout the country.

The Council is also saddened by the on-going stigma around COVID-19 patients, the increasing rate of domestic violence

throughout the country, as well as stress and anxiety among the general population.

The Council has also noted with concern the increasing incidences of land grabbing during the lock-down protected by our security agencies.

We note that the corona virus has overshadowed other existing diseases and conditions such as cancer, TB, diabetes, high blood pressure, sickle cells, HIV and AIDS and malaria, high maternal and child mortality.

The Council recognizes the role of our security agencies in enforcing the presidential directives on COVID-19 and keeping law and order. The Council wishes to thank the security agencies for heeding to the presidential directive to desist from torturing citizens during the enforcement of the COVID-19 guidelines. We have also heard incidences where some members of the public have attacked and seriously injured some security personnel in the line of duty.

It is in this regard that we wish to make the following guidelines:

### **1. To Government:**

- Government should quicken the procurement of protective gear and other health supplies to all health centres that are managing the COVID-19.
- Government should contrite to pay serious attention to the management of existing diseases in the country.
- Government should make provision for transport at the sub-county level for expectant mother to ensure that they deliver safely.
- Government should increase psycho-social support to the patients, families and communities, and indeed, the general awareness on COVID-19.
- Government should follow up, apprehend and bring to book the heads of the security units under whose command the culprits that shield the land grabbers are coming from.

### **2. To Religious leaders:**

- Religious leaders, through their structures and networks (Men, Women, Youth and Children's Associations) should increase psycho-social support to the patients, families and communities, and the general awareness on COVID-19.
- Religious leaders should increase their prophetic voice in the dissemination of the Ministry of Health and Presidential directives on COVID-19, especially in the rural areas.
- Through the religious structures, promote community resilience by

putting in place platforms to support the most vulnerable groups.

- Continue to sustain compassion, hope and care through prayers and virtual outreach programmes.
- The local churches and mosques to mobilize and contribute food and non-food items to the most vulnerable groups within their congregations under the guidance of the National Task Force and IRCU.
- In consultation with Government, IRCU to organize national prayers.

3. To the general public:

- The general public should continue to adhere to the and Ministry of Health guidelines and the presidential directives, most importantly to stay at home.
- The general public should desist from attacking the security agencies while on duty.
- Members of the general public who are sick should remember to consistently take their medicines as prescribed by their doctors.
- The general public should continue to be vigilant and report any incidences of insecurity, emergencies or suspected cases of COVID-19.
- The general public should pray and extend compassion to one another.

<b>NO</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>DESIGNATION</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b>
1.	His Eminence Sheikh Shaban Ramadhan Mubaje	Grand Mufti of Uganda, Chairman, IRCU Council of Presidents	
2.	His Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Stephen Kazimba Mugalu	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	