



14th March 2025

PRESS STATEMENT ON THE CONCLUDED KAWEMPE NORTH CONSTITUENCY BY-ELECTION

The Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) congratulates all Ugandans who turned up to exercise their democratic right to vote in the March 13th Kawempe North by-election. Participating in elections is a fundamental pillar of democracy, and we commend the commitment of citizens who braved the circumstances to make their voices heard.

However, we are deeply concerned by the violence witnessed during the election, particularly the brutality against journalists and ordinary Ugandans. Electoral-related violence threatens the democratic progress our country has made over the years. Each act of violence against innocent Ugandans undermines good governance, weakens public trust in the electoral process, and violates fundamental human rights.

We strongly condemn all acts of violence against any Ugandan. The excessive use of force, including assaulting journalists, is a gross human rights violation and a direct **contravention of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda**. No Ugandan should ever be subjected to inhumane treatment for exercising their rights or performing their professional duties. Such violence scares away voters, as reflected in the low voter turnout recorded in this by-election.

Additionally, we are alarmed by the excessive military deployment during the by-election in Kawempe North. It is unacceptable that security personnel, whose mandate is to protect citizens, were caught on camera beating journalists. The media plays an essential role in ensuring transparency and accountability in electoral processes. Any attack on journalists is an attack on press freedom, democracy, and

the people's right to information. We call upon the authorities to investigate these incidents and ensure that those responsible are held accountable. Furthermore, such heavy military deployments in a civil exercise come with a heavy cost on the taxpayers.

As the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda, we call upon:

1. The Government and Security Agencies – To uphold human rights, exercise restraint, and ensure the safety of all citizens during elections.
2. The Electoral Commission – To enforce free, fair, and transparent elections without interference.
3. The Media and Civil Society – To continue their noble role in promoting democracy and holding institutions accountable.
4. The Citizens of Uganda – To reject electoral violence and vote based on values and leadership qualities rather than financial inducements.

We remain committed to peace, justice, and good governance and will continue to advocate for a democratic Uganda where all voices are heard and respected.

For God and My Country

Joshua Kitakule

Secretary General

Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU)