



Growing and Serving Together

Uganda Joint Christian Council

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Easter Message 2016

Press Release, Kampala, 24th March, 2016

Beloved people of God:

“I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25)

Introduction

On behalf of the Chairperson of the Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC), The Most Rev. Stanley Ntagali, the Archbishop of the Church of Uganda, and the Co-Chairpersons of the Council, The Most Rev Dr Cyprian Kizito Lwanga, the Archbishop of Kampala Archdiocese, and Metropolitan Jonah Lwanga, the Head of Uganda Orthodox Church, I wish to extend to you very warm Easter greetings. Easter reminds us about the suffering, death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

This year's Easter season is being celebrated against a background of the recently concluded presidential, parliamentary and local government councils' elections. I would like to take this opportunity to share our thoughts on the following matters:

1. Elections and Governance

We would like to thank all Ugandans who participated in the presidential, parliamentary and local governments' elections of 2016 as candidates, candidates' agents, voters, election observers, presiding officers, polling assistants as well as those who were in charge of maintaining law and order. The voter turnout which stood at 67.61% was impressive. It shows the determination of the people of Uganda to play their civic role in defining the direction of our governance through the ballot box.

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Elections are a means of acquiring political authority based on the mandate of the people. Leaders are servants of the people. The theme that is guiding the activities of Uganda Joint Christian Council this year is, “Striving for Greatness through Servanthood” (Mathew 23:11). In that regard, we would like to urge the newly elected political leaders to embrace the spirit of service with humility and to treat all Ugandans equally regardless of their social or political affiliations. In that way, they will be able to unite their constituents and mobilise them to join hands with the Government in implementing the National Development Agenda as spelt out in Uganda Vision 2040, the Second National Development Plan (2015/16-2019/20) and other government policies and programmes of the Government.

2. Justice as our shield and defender

Although the elections were largely peaceful in most parts of the country, there were challenges which left some Ugandans dissatisfied with the outcome of the elections. It was against this background that UJCC issued an interim election observation report on 25th February 2016 in which we set out our views and urged those who are aggrieved to seek redress in the courts of law, an appeal that was heeded by some candidates, hence the ongoing enquiry in Presidential Election Petition No. 1 of 2016 by the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court is the last frontier of justice and we do hope that the Justices of the Supreme Court will rise up to the occasion. Let us support them with prayer!

3. Upholding Human Rights and Rule of Law

According to information available in the public domain, election-related violence has claimed the lives of more than 22 people in Bundibudyo and Kasese districts. This is a worrying development. We would like to extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of those who died in the attacks. In the same vein, we express solidarity with those who have been affected in one way or another by the violence. We would also like to call upon the Government to take all the necessary measures, in consultation with all stakeholders to restore peace and stability.

Ugandans invested heavily in making the 1995 Constitution. The rights which are enshrined in the Constitution are not given

by the State but are inherent. Therefore, all peace-loving citizens of Uganda have the obligation to question every form of human rights abuse and to challenge all systems and structures that perpetuate human rights violation. In that regard, we would like to urge the Uganda Police Force to end the incarceration of Dr. Kizza Besigye which is being done without due process of the law. We would also like to call upon the Uganda Human Rights Commission-a constitutional body charged with the mandate of protecting and promoting human rights, including monitoring the Government's compliance with international treaty and convention obligations on human rights-to invoke the powers vested in it under the Constitution and take the necessary actions.

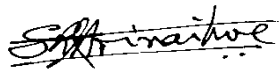
4. Dialogue on Governance

We would like to reiterate our call for an all-inclusive national dialogue that will bring together Government leaders, opposition political leaders, representatives of Civil Society Organisations including the Church and other religious bodies, elders, cultural leaders and other stakeholders. Our calling, as church leaders, is to advocate for love and peaceful co-existence and to seek to reconcile those who are at loggerheads. We would therefore like to urge all Ugandans to embrace our appeal for dialogue so that we can come together as brothers and sisters to discuss and build consensus on issues that have led to the polarization we are witnessing in the country. In this regard, we would like to appeal to all those in leadership positions to rally their constituents to embrace the message of reconciliation and to accept our call for dialogue.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, we would like to urge all Ugandans to embrace the spirit of our national motto, "For God and My Country" so that we can live in unity and feel happy to be associated with this country-the Pearl of Africa's Crown. Let us all embrace the good news of the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, which signifies victory over evil and all it represents (1 Cor15:55).

Happy Easter and God's blessing upon you all!



Rev. Fr Dr Silvester Arinaitwe Rwomukubwe
Executive Secretary