



Press Statement

Mombasa, January 27, 2022

PROTECTING INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN KENYA'S ELECTIONS

On Friday, January 21, 2022, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) officially gazetted Tuesday, August 9, 2022 as the date of the third General Election under the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. In releasing the elections calendar the IEBC sought to assure Kenyans that the up-coming General Election would be free, fair and credible as required by the Constitution.

In the run-up to the 2022 General Elections, we, **The Angaza Movement (TAM)**, a national and grassroots collective of **active citizens** and **Civil Society Organisations**, are deeply concerned about the state of preparedness among critical institutions charged with the management of elections, their capture by various State and sectarian interests, and the entrenched culture of impunity.

Every election in Kenya has been bungled since 2007. Kenya is still burdened by unresolved putative elections, which has deeply undermined public confidence in the integrity of the electoral process. The underwhelming performance of the IEBC in the ongoing registration of voters, compounded with a perennially problematic voters register does not inspire confidence that the election will be free, fair or credible. We are deeply concerned that IEBC has deliberately refused to learn from the dismal performance of the Enhanced Voter Registration last year. There is no evidence that it has engaged the National Registration Bureau to satisfy itself that the delayed release of identification documents is not suppressing voter registration. Voter registration is being carried out in the absence of civic education and awareness and bottlenecks in accessing identity documentation could deny citizens their political rights.

The IEBC has papered over many of the legal and administrative changes the Supreme Court ordered in 2017 after nullifying the presidential election results on account of glaring illegalities and irregularities. The IEBC is hollowed out, and bereft of institutional memory because of unfilled vacancies in the commission and the secretariat. Many of the individuals who left the electoral management body in disgrace have been rewarded with appointments to sensitive positions that could affect the conduct of elections.

The arrant refusal by the state to adequately and timeously fund the electoral management body, inordinate delays in effecting appointments and last-minute changes to the law undoubtedly destabilise the context in which elections will be held.

The government has frustrated the electoral management body including denying the opportunity for any auxiliary elections funding from other development partners.

The fragile security around the country, characterised by incidents of violence in Baringo, Laikipia and Lamu counties and headlined regularly by extra-judicial executions, forced disappearances and a general breakdown in police discipline signal that the window for delivering a credible, free and fair election is shutting. Past elections have been determined by the use of violence against women and other vulnerable groups, with no accountability for sexual and gender-based crimes. SGBV has become a defining feature of political violence employed to curtail women's participation in the country's governance. There can be no free or fair election in a violent environment ring-fenced by impunity.

The IEBC, political parties, the legislature and the Executive continue to defy the Constitution and the courts to promote the inclusion of women, youth and persons living with disabilities. An election held in such a context cannot be said to be free, fair or credible.

The IEBC and other state agencies have deliberately refused to uphold and enforce obligatory integrity standards. It has failed or refused to underwrite democracy in political parties, which are publicly funded, by requiring them to meet the constitutional requirements of transparency and accountability in their political processes. IEBC and other institutions have bowed to political interests that suppress the good of the people, their safety, security and democracy.

The Angaza Movement believes that Kenya has the capacity to conduct free and fair elections. Chapter Six of the Constitution defines the standards for leadership and integrity. We are calling on every Kenyan citizen to do that which the IEBC and other state institutions have failed to do: Put integrity at the head of this election.