

Welcoming Remarks and Objectives of the Convention

Rev. Canon Chris Kinyanjui Kamau, General Secretary, NCCK

National Stakeholders Convention | Ufungamano House | 2 September 2026

Protocol

Archbishop Maurice Muhatia, Chairman of KCCB; Bishop Dr Calisto Odede, Chairman of EAK; Al-Hajj Hassan Ole Naado, Secretary General of SUPKEM; Rev Dr Elias Otieno Agola, Chairman of NCCK; Rt Rev Joseph Obanyi, our Session Chair; distinguished representatives of the IEBC, ORPP, NCIC, NPS, ODPP and KNCHR; leaders of faith, civil society, media, the private sector, and our youth and women's networks — I greet you all in the name of our Lord, and I welcome you most warmly to Ufungamano House.

Welcome and Framing

This house has hosted the conscience of the nation before. It hosted it in 1990, when religious leaders first stood against a closing democratic space. It hosted it in 2007 and 2008, when we worked to end a violence that took over a thousand lives. Today, one year to the 2027 General Election, Ufungamano House hosts us again — not because Kenya has failed to make progress, but because every election cycle in our history has asked the same unresolved question: will the institutions we have built to protect our democracy execute their mandate, or will they bend to power?

We convene today as the Kenya Religious Leaders Forum — KCCB, EAK, SUPKEM and NCCK, four institutions with decades of separate and joint engagement in Kenya's democratic story, now come together under one umbrella because the moment demands a single, synchronized voice. This Convention is the first major undertaking of that new partnership.

Why This Convention, Why Now

Our recent study on the influence of money and religion on democratic outcomes surfaced three realities that should concern every person in this room: the monetization of our politics to a point where campaign spending has no honest relationship to public salary or public service; the vulnerability of the pulpit itself to capture by political interests seeking legitimacy; and the structural exclusion that still keeps youth, women and persons with disabilities at the margins of the very processes meant to include them. These are not abstract findings. They are the terrain on which the 2027 election will be fought, and they are why we are here.

Objectives of the Convention

Over the next two days, we have set ourselves three clear objectives.

First, to assess the readiness of the constitutional bodies charged with our elections and our security — the IEBC, the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties, the NCIC, the National Police Service, the ODPP and the KNCHR — to deliver an election that is democratic, credible and peaceful, and to interrogate their plans honestly against the record of past performance.

Second, to name — without flinching — the key risks that could undermine that outcome, and to work through practical, actionable mitigation measures for each of them, in our breakaway sessions this afternoon and in plenary tomorrow.

Third, to formulate concrete strategies, actions and commitments — from religious leaders, from state institutions, from civil society, from the youth who will inherit whatever we build or fail to build — that will safeguard the integrity of our democratic outcomes before, during and after the 2027 electoral cycle.

By the time we close tomorrow afternoon, we intend to leave with a communique that carries these commitments to the nation, and with an action plan that does not gather dust but is followed through by the Joint Technical Team we have established.

A Word of Charge

Kenya's history teaches us that the space for democratic voice narrows quietly, one compromise at a time, until a nation looks up one day and finds it has traded participation for peace, or peace for participation. Our task in this room, together with the state institutions who have honoured us with their presence, is to insist that we need not choose. We can have both. That is the work before us.

I now invite our Convenors — Archbishop Muhatia, Bishop Odede, Al-Hajj Ole Naado and Rev Dr Agola — to share their institutions' perspectives on this clamour for a democratic, credible and peaceful 2027. Thank you, and God bless our deliberations.