

ELECTIONS BILA NOMA

July-September
2021 Edition

Welcome to this edition of Cohesion Today! With only 10 months to the 2022 General Elections the Commission has prioritized various interventions to rally Kenyans towards attaining Elections Bila Noma. We are pleased to share with you the activities that have been taking place across the country. We appreciate your timely sharing of the articles as we work towards a just and equitable society living in peace, unity and dignity. Enjoy the read!

H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta Meets NCIC Chairman and Commissioners



His Excellency Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta, C.G.H President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya held a meeting with the NCIC Chairman Rev Dr Samuel Kobia, Vice Chairperson Ms Wambui Nyutu OGW, Commissioners and Commission Secretary at his State House office on 13th July 2021. The President emphasised the importance of peaceful coexistence in Kenya, hence the need to step measures in peacebuilding.

H.E. the President Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta on Wednesday 14th July 2021 at State House met the National Cohesion and Integration Commission Policy makers. Led by the Chairman Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia, the President congratulated NCIC for working towards enhancing peaceful coexistence among Kenyans. He thanked the Commission for developing strategies that will ensure Kenyans remain united ahead of the general elections. He reiterated the Government support to ensure the Commission achieves her

mandate.

During the meeting NCIC Chairman presented the second edition of a publication titled, "Political Stability, Economic Prosperity, Social Cohesion- Uhuru Kenyatta's Vision of a Peaceful, Harmonious and United Kenya." The publication authored by the Commission has excerpts that promote its mandate from the President Kenyatta's speeches from 2013 to 2020.

Zambia Elections: Lessons Learnt

The National Cohesion and Integration Abuse of incumbency is unethical: It was noted that some of the ruling elite in Zambia used state resources to mobilize electoral support. Indeed, leaders in office ought not to use their official powers to amass more political power and benefit themselves over other candidates.

Tribalism is artificial: Just like Kenya, some of the politicians in Zambia exploited ethnic fault lines in order to garner support over the leaders from minority communities during their campaigns. Other leaders refuted the ethnic card and emphasized that being Zambian comes first, and then the political party follows in second place. Tribe ought not be an issue. The result was that a presidential candidate from a minority community won the election. In effect, tribalism only serves the elite to achieve their

ambitions but not the electorate to attain their needs. However, if leaders are the first to dispel off tribalism, then it shall become obsolete. Ensure gender balance in elective positions with running mates: Zambia did not have a high number of female candidates for the various elective positions. For instance, there was only one female among 16 presidential candidates. For this reason, presidential candidates, particularly the two main contenders from PF and UPND, had female running mates. There is therefore need to actualize gender balance for elective positions that have running mates such as the presidency and the governor. The youth play a critical role in elections: The youth in Zambia were fully involved in the democratization process. They formed more than half of the registered voters and were more than half of the polling officials. As voters, the youth called for attention to actual issues such as unemployment. In fact, some of them appeared at the poll wearing their graduation gowns to emphasize the issue. As polling agents, the youth worked long hours, some through the night, to ensure that all people on the long queues had voted. Although there was minimal violence observed in the country, most of the youth refrained from participating in verbal and physical violence. This confirms that the resilience of the youth defines whether an election is peaceful and credible. Politicization of Covid 19 violates democratic ideals: There was reported politicization of the Covid 19 whose protocols were said to be applied in a discriminatory manner and curtailed the freedom of assembly and

movement. For instance, there was selective use of the public order Act to prevent, interrupt or suspend campaign rallies largely in opposition zones. To adhere to Covid-19 restrictions, political parties adopted alternative campaign strategies such as door-to-door and virtual campaigns, to prevent the spread of the virus. Media is a key contributor to a Peaceful Election: There were reports of biased and inequitable coverage and reporting of campaign activities by public media. Consequently, the opposition leveraged on social media to mobilize for political support in the midst of strict restrictions surrounding physical campaigns. Political campaigns generally relied on both mainstream and social media to reach to the electorate. Democratic Institutions can hold the Country together: Zambia marked a peaceful transition to power courtesy of the impartiality and competency of its democratic institutions. For example, the Electoral Commission of Zambia and the Zambia Police Service exhibited a high level of professionalism by not interfering with the electoral process. This largely contributed to the peace and unity that the country experienced after announcing the results. Diplomacy is at the heart of observer missions: The Electoral Commission of Zambia accredited several local and international observer groups which were deployed all over the country. International observer teams included the African Union, European Union, Commonwealth, COMESA and International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) among others. The heads of these missions morphed from observers to mediators by engaging in observer mission diplomacy between the president elect and the incumbent with the aim of ensuring that Zambia experiences a peaceful transition of power. Therefore, international observer missions are critical in delivering a peaceful transition. If one must win an election, another must concede: The Zambian polling was calm and peaceful by all international observer missions. Nevertheless, they all emphasized that this would apply to the entire election only if Zambians will keep the peace after the results and declaration of the winner. Peace would not have prevailed in Zambia if the ruling president would not have conceded defeat. Therefore, the parties that have not won must concede graciously because the unity of country is bigger than individual ambitions.



The Commission led by the Vice Chairperson Wambui Nyutu OGW (centre) address the media on lessons learnt from Zambia General Elections. Present in the meeting are Commissioners Sam Kona (left), Dr Danvas Makori, Hon Dorcas Kedogo and Commission Secretary Dr Skitter Ocharo HSC. The Commission had been invited by COMESA to be part of the international observers.

NCIC and NACADA Forge Partnership



NCIC Chairman Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia presents a gift pack to Ms Priscilla Gathiga NACADA Board member during the signing MOU ceremony at the NCIC headquarters.

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) and National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) on 19th August 2021 signed a Memorandum of Understanding at the NCIC Britam Towers headquarters. The two institutions under the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government agreed to collaborate in coordinating initiatives that positively impact on the society.

NCIC Chairman Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia congratulated the two institutions for working tirelessly to ensure the signing of the MOU. He said, "Our signing of this MoU today is of mutual benefit and critical especially as the country gears itself for a high stake general elections in August 2022." Youth play a key role in the political and socio-economic development of a nation. However, they face a lot of challenges that have driven some to drugs and substance abuse. He said, "During our various intervention efforts to promote peace and cohesion NCIC established the vulnerability of youth to drugs and substance abuse." This vulnerability puts the youth at the center stage of conflict and violence, both as perpetrators and victims, consequently posing a great challenge to peace and cohesion.

Dr. Kobia applauded the move to partner since NACADA's mandate includes addressing alcohol and substance abuse among the youth. "I am confident that this partnership will contribute towards peace and cohesion in view of the fact that NACADA is a national agency that has immense experience build over the years in



NCIC Commission Secretary Dr Skitter Ocharo HSC (Right) and Mr Victor Okioma NACADA Chief Executive Officer signing the MOU that will see the two institution collaborate in the areas of mutual interest.

working against drug and substance abuse among the youth and other segments of society," he added.

Ms. Priscilla Gathiga Board Member for NACADA thanked the Commission for agreeing to collaborate. She said, "NCIC is a significant and strategic stakeholder that is of key interest to NACADA." For peace and cohesion to thrive among the various Kenyan communities there is need to focus and tackle the grassroots drivers of conflict. She said, "Usually a section of youth is manipulated to cause chaos and in most cases they are always under the influence of alcohol or drugs." "As an institution mandated to curb alcohol and drugs abuse, we reaffirm our commitment to working with NCIC ahead of the 2022 General Election," she added.

In her remarks, Dr. Skitter Ocharo congratulated the two institution for agreeing to partner for better impact. She said, "NCIC is ready to work and walk the long journey with NACADA in rolling out strategic interventions that will benefit the two institution." She said, "Our NCI Act accords the Commission powers to enter into association with such other bodies, organizations within, or outside Kenya, as it may consider desirable or appropriate and in furtherance of the purpose for which the Commission is established. It is on this provision that this MoU is premised."

In his speech, Dr. Victor Okioma noted that NCIC and NACADA share a lot in common as far as their mandate are concerned. NACADA, NCIC, and Youth ran a successful campaign in the 2017 General Elections. He said, "I am happy that we are here to sign this MOU that is long overdue. We are all in agreement that alcohol and drug driven factors will definitely affect

peace and cohesion.” In view of the elections youth are usually mobilized to disrupt the peaceful coexistence hence the need to focus on this group. “We are therefore committed to give support to ensure a lasting natural relationship with NCIC”, he added.

The key areas of the NCIC and NACADA MOU are;

- Participate in the initial design and planning of joint interventions and strategic reviews and further planning as deemed appropriate by the parties.
- Jointly implement activities in accordance with the agreements.
- Carry out activities related to the implementation of the partnership as defined and agreed upon in advance.
- Provide on-going feedback on the development and impact of the partnership at the local, national and regional levels.
- Engage the necessary Government Officials and bodies to ensure the activities of the joint partnership remain transparent and in line with the mandate of NCIC
- Promote the outcomes and impacts of the partnership in coordination with NACADA and jointly developed dissemination plan
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In her vote of thanks, Commissioner Hon. Dorcas Kedogo urged the technical team to roll out strategic initiatives that would ensure both institutions benefit for a peaceful Kenyan society.

NCIC Partners with Interpeace

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) and Interpeace 10th August 2021 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a long term strategic partnership and collaboration to implementing peacebuilding in Kenya. Interpeace is an international organization for peacebuilding that supports locally led peacebuilding initiatives around the world.

The strategic partnership will contribute to long term participatory, process driven peacebuilding using results-based approaches that will be macro-oriented, policy focused and consensually built.

The partnership will enhance strategies that promote understanding of drivers of conflict and sources of resilience, promote consensual processes and encourage new partnerships



Interpeace Sr. Representative East & Central Africa Dr. Theo Hollander, NCIC Commission Secretary/CEO Dr. Skifter Ocharo and NCIC Commissioner Hon. Farah Abdulaziz during the signing of the MoU

between local, national, regional and international actors for sustainable peace development based on the strengthening of local capacity.

The Commission and Interpeace will work together to identify peacebuilding needs and priorities in Kenya and design joint interventions, engaging necessary Government officials and bodies.

Kericho County: Sensitization Forum for the Scribes

The media is a key stakeholder of the National Cohesion and Integration Commission and the peacebuilding process in Kenya. Hence, the Commission is sensitizing journalists and bloggers across the country on conflict sensitive reporting, hate speech and ethnic contempt ahead of the 2022 General Elections and beyond.

On 11th and 12th August 2021, the NCIC conducted a sensitization forum for 20 Journalists and bloggers from various media houses in Kericho County. Some of the topics tackled included unpacking hate speech, incitement to violence laws and freedom of expression, the role of media in countering political intolerance, electoral violence and fake news. NCIC Deputy Director Corporate Communication, Olive Metet encouraged the journalists to embrace objective reporting in ensuring peaceful coexistence among Kenyans. “The internet offers the possibility of every user to create, publish and consume media content but wrong use of social media platforms can cause conflict and disagreement among people” NCIC Senior Social Media Investigator, Wycliffe Mwatu reiterated. In solving disputes related to hate speech and incitement to violence, NCIC plays a key role by reaching out to various groups of people and educating the



Kericho County Commissioner James Nyamwamu during the forum in Kericho County

public on the importance of enhancing peace, said Jackson Mwikamba, Senior Legal Officer. The Media Council of Kenya (MCK) took the journalists through conflict sensitive journalism and the art of storytelling. Media Council of Kenya Deputy CEO, Victor Bwire urged journalist and bloggers to observe the code of ethics in reporting matters that would enhance peaceful coexistence. He said, "As reporters, we ought to embrace patience in reporting conflict."

NCIC Officials paid a courtesy call to Kericho County Commissioner, James Nyamwamu who shared challenges to peaceful co-existence in the County, possible solutions and areas of partnership. He lauded the Commission for rolling out targeted programs ahead of the elections, saying such programs should be a continuous process to inculcate national values. Kericho County borders Kisumu, Bomet and Nakuru counties and has the largest share of Mau forest that has been a center of conflicts and violence in the recent past.

NCIC Development partner GIZ supported the activity which also brought on board key partners like the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) and Media Council of Kenya (MCK).

The NCIC held similar engagements in Narok and Nakuru in April and June this year and plans are in gear for Kisumu, Nandi, Kakamega among other regions. So far, over 70 journalists have been engaged and by the end of the exercise, over 100 journalists and bloggers will have been sensitized ahead of the elections. This is part of the engagements that the Commission conducts throughout to achieve its mandate.

The Commission aims to enhance understanding of NCIC's mandate especially on what entails hate speech as well as the NCIC Roadmap to Peaceful 2022 General Elections dubbed Election Bila Noma.



Journalists and bloggers at NCIC Media Sensitization Forum in Kericho County.

Marsabit County: In search of Lasting Peace

Marsabit County has experienced a wave of violent conflicts, mainly between the Gabra and Borana communities. The drivers of conflict are majorly land and boundary disputes, access and control to pasture, water and grazing land, perception of ethnic expansionism, cross-border tension with Ethiopia, inadequate state response to conflicts, political incitement, perceived or real unfair distribution of County resources and formation of tribal ethnic political alliances.

Following persistent ethnic violence in Marsabit County, on the 15th of July, 2021, the President of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta held a consultative meeting with a cross-section of political leaders from the County. The meeting at State House Nairobi noted with great concern the cyclic flare-ups of inter-community conflicts in Marsabit. He urged the leaders to use their positions of influence to foster peace and reconciliation, noting that the hallmark of true leadership is to bequeath present and future generations a peaceful, prosperous, and united Marsabit County. With great regret, the Head of State observed that the violent conflicts leading to loss of lives, destruction of property, and displacement of persons are largely as a result of incitement by selfish politicians and community leaders. The Head of State challenged the leadership and the people of Marsabit to honor heroic Kenyans who've lost their lives over the years in pursuit of peace in the region especially, the seven leaders who painfully perished in the

2006 plane crash while on a peace mission to the County by ensuring peace and harmony exists in the region. The head of state gave the leaders a period of five days to propose measures and initiatives to curb the intractable conflict in the County.

Following the presidential directive, NCIC led a two-day consultative process with political leaders from Marsabit County and Inter-religious Council of Kenya at the Kenya School of Government, Nairobi. A practical roadmap and implementation plan was developed towards achieving sustainable peace in Marsabit. One of the action points for NCIC was to hold reconciliatory meetings with the affected communities.

It is against this back drop that the Commission held separate engagements with the four major ethnic communities; Borana, Gabra, Rendile and Burji in Saku Sub-county from 14th to 17th August 2021 to discuss what the communities felt were the triggers and possible solutions to the recurrent conflicts in the County, which they were to later share during an inter-community meeting.

The NCIC team and Interpeace led by Commissioner Hon. Farah Abdulaziz held consultative meetings with Deputy County Commissioners in Sololo, Moyale, Turbi and peace committee members comprising of elders, women, youth and PWDs on 20th to 23rd August 2021. DCC Sololo, Robert Nzuki noted

that residents of Rawana who were displaced due to conflict between two communities needed to be resettled. NCIC Commissioner Farah Abdulaziz said it was unfortunate that the situation in Marsabit was getting out of control to a point the President had to intervene and summon the County political leaders to draw a roadmap towards achieving sustainable peace. He reiterated that NCIC is ready to partner with the DCC's offices on issues of peace building and national cohesion. He said peace is a gradual process and can only be truly kept by the residents.

DCC Moyale, William ole Kakimon said his office works with the peace committee and the 35 ole Kaparo committee on home grown solutions and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to promote cohesion among communities and neighbors from Ethiopia, Mandera and Wajir Counties. The 35 Kaparo peace committee was formed following the 2013 post-election violence in Moyale. It was observed that Moyale is generally peaceful but due to the effects of drought, there is bound to be friction and that community sensitization ahead of the General Elections should commence as soon as possible. Political instability in neighboring Ethiopia has caused people to cross over into Kenya and there is need for Government to manage the situation. NCIC Commissioner Farah Abdulaziz said the Commission will walk with the DCC and the peace committees to maintain the peace in Moyale.

On 24th August 2021, a grand inter-community meeting was held between the Gabra, Borana, Burji and Rendille communities in Jirime, Saku Sub-county, Marsabit County. The meeting was a culmination of a way forward for lasting solution to the conflicts in the county. The participants from the different ethnic groups shared hindrances to finding lasting peace which included biasness by the security agencies, lack of financial and logistical support to Sub-County peace committees, political alliances based on ethnicity, perception of expansionism by some leaders that causes conflicts between the grass-root communities, the presence of militia among others. Despite the conflicts in Marsabit County, all is not lost, their children are finding love among each other and crossing the tribal hatred by inter-marrying. The NCIC team had an opportunity to attend a wedding ceremony between a Borana lady and a Rendile man in Somare location in Moyale Sub-County. The



Gabra, Rendille and Burji Community Peace Meetings in Saku Sub-county, Marsabit County

Ceremony brought together the Rendile community from Korr location of Laisamis Sub-county across the vast Marsabit County. Inter-marriages encourage cultural diffusion and sense of oneness.



NCIC led by Commissioner Abdulaziz Farah pose for a group photo at the Deputy County Commissioner office in Sololo Subcounty Marsabit. NCIC is working closely with key peace actors to find lasting solution to peace in this region

Proposed resolutions included an exclusive Gabra and Borana community meeting, vetting and issuing of guns to National Police Reserve, revival of Nyumba Kumi Initiative, control of bodaboda operations, youth sports peace tournament, identification and establishment of police posts in hotspot areas, facilitation of Sub-county peace committees and grass-root meetings in Shambole, Songa, Karare, Kituruni, Leyai, Turbi, Bubisa, Ele-borr and Ele-dimtu. Exclusive Gabra and Borana meetings were held in Jirime on 6th to 9th September 2021 in a quest for sustainable peace in Marsabit County.

Some of the resolutions arrived at during the meeting as stated by NCIC Commissioner Hon. Abdulaziz Ali Farah during a press conference included complete comprehensive ceasefire and cessation of hostilities (no more gunshots, no more torching of houses, no more land grabbing and no more hate speech), formation of a sub-committee that will manage pasture and water during this drought season, the Government has taken up the responsibility to deal with boundary and location issues, those who have been displaced will have to be



Borana and Gabra Elders at an inter-community peace meeting at Jirime on 6th September 2021 pledging to ensure peaceful coexistence in Marsabit County.



NCIC Commissioner Hon. Abdulaziz Ali Farah addressing a Borana and Gabra inter-community meeting held at Jirime Hotel Marsabit on 6th September 2021



NCIC Commissioner Hon. Abdulaziz Ali Farah, Marsabit County Commissioner Mr. Paul Rotich, NCIC Deputy Director Liban Guyo and Marsabit County Security Officials during the Borana and Gabra inter-community meeting in Marsabit

resettled in the long term, they asked their political leaders to walk with them in this journey.

Nandi and Kisumu Counties: Community Dialogue Forum

In partnership with GIZ, the PBR department embarked on implementation of the first of three inter and intra-ethnic community dialogue processes with elders, peace committee representatives, national government officers, youth and women from the Nandi and Luo communities residing along the borders of Muhoroni, Kisumu and Tinderet in Nandi County. The dialogue forum was held on 1st and 2nd September, 2021 at Chepswerta Full Gospel Church and had representation of the thirty (30) community members of the Luo and Nandi communities. The dialogue forums seek to enhance equal opportunities for all groups in the communities and engage in the prevalent conflicts in the target areas in a non-violent manner while also recognising the contribution of local peace structures and initiatives towards prevention of violent conflicts and building the resilience of communities against political manipulation.

Narok and Nakuru Counties: Peace Initiatives at the border

Narok North Sub County borders Nakuru County and has over the years experienced persistent conflicts over politics, administrative units, inter-community tensions, Mau Forest restoration and cattle rustling. There has been heightened tension along the border, with recent clashes in May-June 2021 resulting in loss of lives. The Commission facilitated community sensitization forums in Narok North Sub-county targeting County security team, political leaders, local Maasai elders, youth and women in a bid to restore peace and tranquillity. The forums were held on 13th – 17th July, 2021.

The Commission, Anglican Development Service (ADS), National Government Administration Officers (NGAOs) and political leaders embarked on a Rapid Response Initiative (RRI) to enhance peace, cohesion and integration and strengthen the existing interventions in resolving the recurring conflicts at the border of Narok and Nakuru Counties.

The NCIC team held several meetings with the following stakeholders during the one-week engagement; Narok North Sub-County Security Intelligence Committee, political leaders, elders, women, youth and a culmination of a public baraza. The stakeholders recommended the following actions to be taken by NCIC to ensure

peace is sustained in the conflict-prone region:

- Bring the conflicting communities together;
- Lobby for more financial resources and support to peace initiatives along the border;
- Government departments, especially the KFS to take charge of the forest by deploying more rangers to guard the forest and involve Community Forest Associations (CFAs) in forest management
- The KFS to resolve the issue of the forest outline

Capacity building of communities' peace structures

NCIC together with GIZ held the first of five trainings to strengthen local peace structures. The training that convened 38 peace actors from Njoro and Molo Sub-counties took place in Nakuru Town, Nakuru County from 13th to 21st July 2021 "We intend to build the capacities of local peace actors in peace building and conflict transformation. The two sub-counties in the recent past have been an epicentre of ethnic violence pitting the Kalenjin and Ogiek ethnic groups against each other over land," said Mr. Liban Guyo, Assistant Director, Peace building and Reconciliation department. The representation of the training included members of sub-county peace committees, council of elders representing the various ethnic groups, nyumba kumi (community policing) committees, local churches, age set chiefs, selected youth, and women.

The three-day Nakuru training focused on various topics- The Kenya Peace Architecture; Conflict Transformation and Analysis; Conflict Prevention with a focus on Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) mechanisms; Negotiation and Mediation; Mental Health and Self-Care and Diversity with focus on gender. "Following a participatory approach, the training has been a common learning experience for all the actors involved. The main goal has been to empower the participants to reconfirm that their role as peacebuilders is essential for their communities. It has been an amazing experience, which we trust will bring new perspectives on these topics in Nakuru County," said Dr. Juan Felipe Carrillo, Peacebuilding Advisor GiZ-CPS Kenya.

Speaking at the end of the three-day training, Bishop Dr. Samuel K. Muya, Molo Sub-county representative remarked, "The teaching was very articulate, the teachers were able to capture the minds of all of us- young and old- their language and gestures made the learning very exciting. I was surprised at the end of the teaching day all members wanted to hear more. The participation by the learners was excellent- everyone felt part of every exercise and

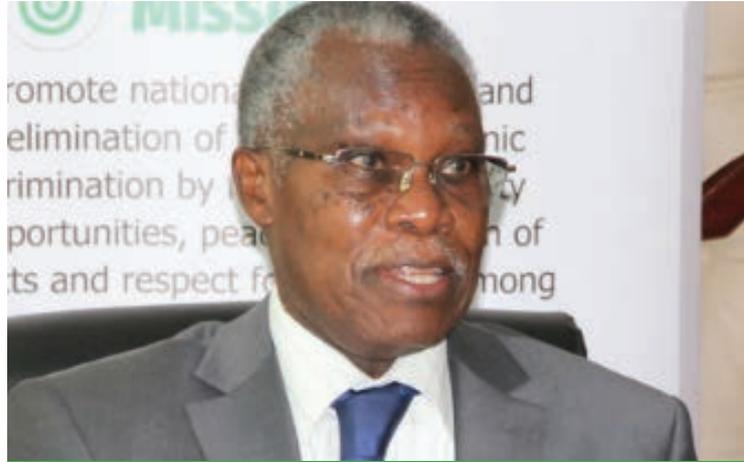
conversation."

Similar trainings will also be conducted in Uasin Gishu, Nandi, Kisumu and Narok Counties. The five targeted counties have been experiencing re-current conflicts over the years and the training interventions aim to have sustainable peace efforts by enhancing ownership and acceptance of the community conflicts and proffering solutions driven by the affected local communities.

PHOTOBOOTH



Women from the Maasai and Kipsigis communities who could previously not see eye to eye are now sharing a meal as they discuss their welfare



The chairperson of the NCIC, Rev Samuel Kobia calls on the church to apply the spirit of discernment in addressing the issues affecting the country ahead of next year's election.



Mr Victor Bwire Media Council of Kenya Deputy CEO said, "Journalists should take personal responsibility and desist from exaggerating information when responding to conflicts"



Commissioner Eng Hon. Philip Okundi EBS during intercommunity dialogue forum at Chepswerta along the Kisumu and Nandi border