

## Kenya: messages from stranded Catholic news service

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The Nairobi-based Catholic Information Service Africa (CISA) sent us the following message this morning: Dear reader of CISA, this is not an official bulletin, as we don't know yet when we will be able to resume our regular service, as our journalists are still stranded in their home areas due to lack of transport and security. Receive now this two documents (Letter of the Bishops and Letter of the Religious Superiors (Male) to the Bishops), which are important to understand the position of the Catholic Church on the dramatic events unfolding now here in Kenya. KENYA EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE MY PEACE I GIVE YOU Our Dear Kenyans, May the Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all We the Bishops of Kenya, with deep concern wish to address all our Christians and Kenyans in general, at this critical and crucial moment of our country. We have witnessed with deep sorrow and concern the outbreak of violence and the breakdown of law and order that has led to, numerous deaths, injuries and destruction of property, creating fear and helplessness that has led many to flee from their homes. We wish to make a passionate appeal to all Kenyans, men and women, old and youth, from all the political parties, and from all walks of life, to refrain from violence and from the senseless killing of our brothers and sisters! Our dear person, Kenya is our together! It is a time to stop and reflect on the consequences of our actions. We have lived together for all these years as brothers and sisters. There is therefore no reason for us to be used to raise our hand against our neighbor because he or she belongs to a different ethnic group or political affiliation. Life is Sacred! We all belong to one family of God. Our dear people, we must all be responsible for the security and peaceful co-existence in our country. (a) Let us restrain ourselves from all violent, destructive or divisive behaviour remarks or comments. (b) Refuse to take part in any form of destruction, looting or even receiving stolen goods. (c) Do not think you are powerless. You can do something. Talk to relatives, friends, neighbours, people you know who can help resolve the current situations. (d) Encourage any person involved in or engaged in destructive behaviour to cease from doing so. (e) At this time of dire need be ready to share basic goods like food shelter and water with people with greater need than ourselves. (f) We especially urge our youth not to be enticed to take up violent means. We are close to the many who have lost their loved ones in these skirmishes. As we console you, we pray for you to find peace in your hearts. We also feel with

those injured, abused and displaced, as we journey with you at this difficult moment. Once more we offer our mediation in this difficult crisis. We especially urge our priests and religious in our parishes and religious communities to facilitate as much as possible justice, peace and solidarity to those suffering at this moment. We finally appeal to all Kenyans to have recourse to prayer, and to organize special prayers for peace in our Churches whenever possible. Peace I give, my own peace, I give you. A Peace with the world cannot give, This is my gift to you!

John 14.27 "Let Justice be our shield and defender. Signed: His Eminence John Cardinal Njue And the other two Archbishops and 21 Bishops of Kenya The original document can be requested at [secgeneral@catholicchurch.or.ke](mailto:secgeneral@catholicchurch.or.ke) RELIGIOUS SUPERIOR CONFERENCE OF KENYA . RSCK P. O. Box 827, Nairobi, 00606 (Sarit Centre) Kenya Tel: 020-2018911 - Email: [rsck@wananchi.com](mailto:rsck@wananchi.com) Tuesday, January 01, 2008; The World Day of Peace To; The Chairman and Members of the Kenya Episcopal Conference (KEC). Please accept our kind and cordial greetings. Especially in the light of the events following the announcement of the recent Election Results, we believe that the Religious Superiors Conference of Kenya (RSCK), with the Bishops of Kenya, have a responsibility to be critically objective, above and beyond allegiance to ethnic or party politics in this country. At this historical juncture for the Kenyan Nation, following the recent Election Process, we consider these issues to need critical and urgent attention.

1. The evident advancement in the quality and involvement of the Kenyan People in the Democratic Electoral process was very positive up to the point of collecting, counting and announcing results. There are serious moral and legal questions to be answered by officers and bodies responsible for these three tasks.
2. The furthering intensity, deepening and politicization of Ethnic divisions and hatred in the Country has to be addressed. The loss of life and violence, in the last few days, have reached new unacceptable heights. Our convictions and actions have to be based on Justice, Truth and Peace. This is vital in order to prevent this beloved nation falling further into chaos and moving towards the ethnic hatreds and terrible deeds evidenced in other international regions such as Rwanda and Kosova.
3. There is an urgent need for the political and religious leaders to honestly evaluate their own role during this crisis time in terms not only of their vision and leadership, but also in regards to solidarity with the people who feel abandoned, deserted, confused, afraid and isolated. We would recommend that the KEC should advocate the creation of an independent arbitration forum/body to be established, of an international nature, that is accepted by all parties, in order to find a resolution to the present political crisis in Kenya. This forum/body should also propose future electoral methodologies/commissions, to be independent of political interference from parties involved in the Kenya Electoral Process. Ultimately this country needs peace and reconciliation based on Justice, for a people, who have endured far too much pain. The people need to hear a message of hope and support from the religious leaders of this country. We do realize that these points have been well spelt out in the Encyclical, "Spes Salvi,; the only way forward for the present is a hope that is rooted in God alone On behalf of the Religious Superiors Conference of Kenya, Yours sincerely, Rev Fr Patrick Devine SMA Chairman of RSCK