

SPEECH BY THE CHAIRPERSON, INTERIM INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION (IEC), DURING THE REGISTRATION OF PRISONERS FOR THE REFERENDUM AT KAMITI – JULY 2ND 2010

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have gathered here to witness a remarkable event in the implementation of electoral reforms in Kenya.

For the first time, Prisoners will vote on the draft constitution and therefore make decisions on important matters of this nation.

IIEC accepted the court order of 22nd June, 2010 to register prisoners for the August 4th Referendum because, though it comes with financial and logistical challenges, the spirit of the ruling is in line with the changes we planned to introduce to the electoral process in Kenya.

As a reform Commission, the ruling conforms to the draft Election Bill 2010, which when passed by Parliament would allow for the registration of Prisoners as voters not only for a Referendum but also during national elections. It should be noted that the order was specific to the August 4th Referendum. It says, in order no. 4 "For the avoidance of doubt, the orders made by the court therein relate only to the referendum process set to take place on 4th August, 2010" IIEC will therefore withdraw the voters cards and nullify the respective registers after the referendum vote.

We have made all the necessary arrangements and the entire exercise should take **only a week**. The Commission has gazetted

all the 103 Prisons countrywide as polling stations, gazetted returning officers and deputies. Our Constituency Election Coordinators (CECs) remain Returning Officers and the officers in charge of the Prisons will be their deputies.

Arrangements have been made with the National Registration Bureau to fast track the issuing of IDs. We have also appealed to relatives of inmates to take IDs to them, if they happen to have them. Of the 48,089 prisoners, it is estimated that only 3,000 have ID cards.

Training of registration officials is going on at KCCT Mbagathi (Multimedia University). We are confident we'll deliver on this additional task. We will use the Electronic Voter Registration System (EVR) because it is fast and makes it possible to generate a voter register promptly. The fact that the prisoners are in a confined and controlled environment is administratively convenient to undertake the task.

The exercise was not budgeted for and we are at the close of financial year but resources will be sought to ensure the exercise succeeds.

I would like to thank all the government departments, development partners and other agencies for their support during this exercise. We especially would like to appreciate the efforts of the National Registration officials and the Prisons Department for the strong commitment to walk with us the length it takes to achieve this important national obligation.

Thank you.

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