



CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF GHANA

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CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF GHANA – EMINENT PERSONS GROUP OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Statement on Emerging pockets of Violence in the on- going Voter Registration Exercise

The Eminent Persons Group of Religious Leaders in Ghana commend Ghanaians for the generally calm and peaceful conduct during the on-going voter registration exercise. The atmosphere or environment outside many registration centres that have been visited are generally peaceful.

We are however, very much concerned and condemn the pockets of violence emerging in some centres like Banda, Ledzokuku, Asutifi South and Kasoa among others and call on the Electoral Commission and the Inspector General of Police to conduct a prompt investigation into the alleged use of firearms by certain persons, including a Minister of State and also deaths that have occurred in the course of this registration exercise. All those responsible are to be held accountable. The admission by the State Minister, herself, even though contrary to several eye witness accounts show that there were some other armed persons present with her, who fired the shots. Such high-profile incidents should not be countenanced by our State Security. Acts or threats of coercion, intimidation or physical harm perpetrated to affect the electoral

process, all in the context of electoral competition should have no place in these worrying times with COVID-19 hanging over us.

Violence aimed at skewing the playing field well upstream of elections presents difficulties for not only election administrators but all of us Ghanaians, who are trying to hold credible elections, and finding effective options for preventing it or mitigating against its effects.

Violence by powerful incumbents, like the Minister should be totally condemned by all well-meaning Ghanaians. Addressing the current situation involving Honourable Hawa Koomson will assure confidence and trust in our EC and the security ahead of the 2020 elections. Pre-election violence itself can damage the credibility of elections as much as flawed elections may spark violence.

The current violence during this voter registration is an attempt to influence the composition of the electorate or disrupt the registration process.

We, therefore, call on State authorities to uphold the human rights of all Ghanaians, including the freedom of assembly, association and expression. We call on the Security Services to remain impartial and exercise restraint in responding to the public errs. We urge all Ghanaians, especially the political parties to reject violence and avoid using inflammatory language, but rather use peaceful and legal means to challenge results, and outcomes.

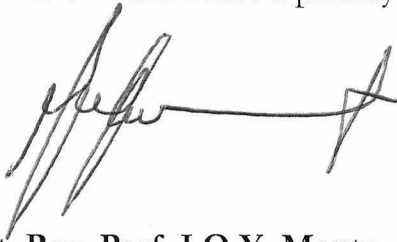
The Electoral Commission should develop a fraud-prevention strategy, which should be explained — to the extent that doing so would not undermine its effectiveness — to political parties to help build confidence in the process and results. A publicity campaign by the EC explaining the importance of fraud prevention could also promote confidence.

A large-scale civic education campaign by the NCCE to ensure peaceful participation in the registration process is urgently required especially using the state media. The National Media Commission should try and clamp down on the use of inflammatory language in the mass media, perhaps in partnership with civil society playing a monitoring role.

We urge civil society observer groups to be vigilant in monitoring the election processes and make sure that all violent acts or any propensities for violent acts are exposed, named and shamed.

We call on all Ghanaians to safeguard the hard won gains made in consolidating peace and democracy and urge them to resolve their differences through dialogue. We reiterate our commitment as Eminent Persons of Religious Bodies to support peaceful, credible, just and inclusive elections.

Let us all make Peace a priority.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.O.Y. Mante', with a long horizontal line extending to the right and a small flourish at the end.

Rt. Rev. Prof. J.O.Y. Mante

Chairman Eminent Persons Group of Religious Leaders

Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church Ghana