

Joint Zanzibar House of Representative and European Parliament High Level Seminar

'The peaceful conduct of the elections: fostering dialogue and respect in the election campaign and its follow up, inclusive of women and youth', 2 to 4 September, Zanzibar, Tanzania

STATEMENT OF OUTCOMES

1. General considerations for achieving peaceful elections

- Dialogue is not a one off exercise but a process that establishes mutual understanding, political tolerance, builds confidence and is essential to confirming political good will. As such dialogue is an investment in sustainable peace in Zanzibar and Tanzania as a whole.
- In overcoming a history of electoral tensions, and incidents of violence, the people of Zanzibar should be proud of achieving a period of peaceful Government of National Unity that has not been witnessed in many other places in the world. This achievement should not be undermined but consolidated on 25 October 2015.
- Justice, freedom, transparency and fairness are key to the integrity of the electoral process and to peace in Zanzibar. As such all stakeholders have a shared responsibility to respect the electoral rules that will lead to a peaceful outcome.
- the Government shall give equal opportunities to all political parties without any favour whatsoever.

2. Considerations for the Political Parties:

- reconfirm the commitment and responsibilities as set out in the *Guidelines for Political Parties on the Election Code of Ethics 2015 General Elections*.
- avoid abusive language, intimidation and negative statements.
- do not try and replace the police with party militias but respect the laws of the country and the limits of party roles.
- respect the rules and laws regulating campaigning e.g. starting time and ending time of campaigns for all parties.
- do not misuse religion for political ends or provoke violence.
- use political ends and means to resolve issues and promote peace on a permanent basis (and not only during the election period).
- a healthy democracy includes accepting defeat in line with the results of the elections.
- do not misuse young people and their vulnerability as instruments to achieve political ends or to carry out acts of violence. Instead young political leaders should take their role seriously as opinion makers of the young electorate and contribute to reducing tensions and conflict around elections.
- have a responsibility to ensure that women are fully represented in political parties at all levels including in decision making as well as fully represented in government and parliament.

3. Considerations for the Police:

- do not use excessive force under any circumstances (and likewise the people should not take up arms).
- inform fully citizens of all security measures around the elections incl the role of new security forces and their uniforms.
- ensure the safe participation by all citizens and political party actors taking part in campaign rallies.

4. Considerations for the Media:

- report accurately in order to avoid provoking tensions based on unproven reports.
- ensure fair access of airtime for all political parties.

5. Considerations for the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC):

- communicate the results in a timely fashion (incl. by informing the public to explain any delays).
- transparency and accountability are key to ensuring trust by the electorate in the work of the ZEC.
- polling agents should not create an environment of suspicion of voters.
- establish a proper mechanism and communication strategy to ensure voter education of young people.
- ensure full access to the electoral process for people with disabilities.

6. Considerations for Civil Society:

- play a full, active and neutral role in voter education.
- hold the key stakeholders (political parties, ZEC, police etc) to account especially when it comes to accepting the results of the elections.
- enhance their active engagement with the House of Representatives for an inclusive democracy (incl. through their elected representatives but also directly by participating in public proceedings, requesting information from the committees, contributing to the life and work of the House of Representatives etc).
- fostering a culture of peace in society starting within the household.
- promoting a culture in Zanzibar favourable to the full participation of women in political life which can contribute to a fairer and more progressive society for the benefit of communities in the country.

7. Considerations for Religious leaders:

- enhance dialogue both at grass-roots level and with the leaders of political parties to send a joint message of peace and tranquillity which are core values shared by all the people of Zanzibar.

8. Final remarks: continue the peaceful dialogue, with the support of the international community where necessary:

- before the elections, by establishing a domestic mechanism of regular meetings (once or twice a week) between ZEC, police, political parties on problems emerging and peaceful solutions. This could be extended to include representatives of civil society incl. the religious leaders (as observers).
- after the elections, by establishing reconciliation committees at local and national levels (drawing on the wisdom of the elderly, religious leaders and politically influential leaders). The role of the local committees is particularly important as forums that provide local responses without waiting for the convening of bodies at the national level.