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KURA YANGU SAUTI YANGU PRESS STATEMENT ON THE ONGOING MASS VOTER REGISTRATION PROCESS

Kura Yangu, Sauti Yangu (KYSY) is a citizen movement spearheaded by a number of like-minded civil society organizations who have come together to proactively support Kenya's preparations for the 2017 elections with a view to ensuring that the country minimizes the risks related to dysfunctional electoral systems and practices.

KYSY is also committed to promoting political dialogue across the country. We believe that political consensus on the elections will increase public confidence and ultimately make both the process and results more credible and legitimate, and therefore contribute to the overall state of political certainty and stability in the country.

As the current mass voter registration (MVR) process enters its final stage, we express deep concern over events surrounding the process and the status of the process. Thus far, the MVR has been marred by a series of irregularities:

- We note that all political parties are mobilizing for mass registration along ethnic lines, thus continuing a process of polarizing the country along ethnic lines. Of special note is the fact that the President, who has a constitutional obligation and responsibility to promote and enhance the unity of the nation, is also involved in this ethnic polarisation.
- Coercive registration methods (which include withholding of services for those without registration cards). This is happening at all levels and across the country.
- Delays and difficulties in acquiring national IDs, especially in marginalized areas, which is an inherent method for predetermining the outcome of the electoral contest
- The continuing use of the Green Book, which is not verifiable or transparent
- Nonfunctional and dysfunctional BVR kits
- Registered voters who do not appear on the register
- Multiple people with the same ID appearing in the register
- New registrants who find their names already in the register
- Registration bribery

Issues such as these threaten the credibility of the electoral process. The country, which is still recovering from the effects of the post-election violence of 2007, risks another round of electoral violence as a result of the continuing ethnic mobilization.

Without a single, verifiable register of voters, it is impossible to respect and guarantee the sanctity of the one person, one vote principle. We call for the release of data on the rate of registration at the constituency level, without which it is impossible to monitor and verify the registration process.

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We also call on the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) to publicly explain how it will address and resolve the above-mentioned issues so that all citizens can be assured that they will be able to exercise their vote and that their votes will be counted on election day. We further call upon the IEBC to publicize its plan to ensure the security of the BVR data and to explain the role of the green book.

As the constitutionally mandated body charged with the responsibility to address these challenges, we call on the IEBC to act independently and with integrity to preserve the electoral process. KYSY will work to ensure transparency in the verification of the registration process and further political dialogue with all actors

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