

KENYA GENERAL ELECTIONS
ARRIVAL STATEMENT
THE HONOURABLE BRUCE GOLDING
FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA
CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP

The Commonwealth Secretary-General, The Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland QC, has invited me to chair the Commonwealth Observer Group for Kenya's General Elections.

I consider this a great honour to be a part of this important democratic endeavour.

This Group, whose members have been chosen from across the Commonwealth, was constituted at the invitation of Kenya's Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), ahead of the elections to be held next week, Tuesday 9 August.

I am joined by nineteen other eminent persons with a wealth of experience spanning the social and political spectrum of our Commonwealth.

We are here to observe the electoral process and will act impartially and independently as we assess its organisation and conduct.

The deployment of this Observer Group follows a pre-election assessment mission to Kenya in April 2022. An advance team has been on the ground since 16 July to observe preparations ahead of the polls and campaigns. They will update us, the main Group, regarding their meetings with stakeholders and their preliminary findings, which will play a pivotal role in our team's work and our subsequent observation role and report.

We know how important elections are in a democracy; they empower the people to choose representatives who will, in turn, make decisions on their behalf.

We, therefore, hope our presence in this country serves as a reminder that the people of the Commonwealth stand together with Kenyans as they exercise their democratic rights, recognising how important these elections are to the people of Kenya, East Africa, Africa, and the whole of the Commonwealth at large.

We are also reminded that the COVID-19 pandemic is not over, especially as we continue to hear and read reports of soaring infection rates in certain parts of the world. We urge all stakeholders to abide by national and international COVID-19 protocols, which my team and I will continue to adhere to until we depart Kenya on 14 August 2022.

While we are here, our mandate is to observe and assess the pre-election environment and the conduct of elections on polling day, against the backdrop of Kenya's national legislation and regulations - as well as regional and international commitments.

And as is customary, we will report on whether the elections have been conducted to the standards to which Kenya has committed itself, including its own laws.

Our planned briefings with relevant stakeholders, which will continue tomorrow from where the advance team left off, will be wide-ranging, encompassing updates from the IEBC, political parties, the media, civil society organisations including citizen observers, persons with disabilities, women, and youth groups. We will also engage closely with other international observer missions which have been deployed to Kenya for these elections.

From Sunday 7 August, our observers, grouped into small teams, will be deployed to locations across the country to observe preparations ahead of the polling day. They will also meet with various stakeholders in their respective locations.

On polling day, which is 9 August, we will observe the opening, voting, closing, counting, and the results management processes. We will then issue a statement on our preliminary findings on Thursday 11 August.

After that, a final report will then be prepared and submitted to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, and subsequently shared with the government of Kenya, relevant stakeholders, and the people of Kenya.

Today, the Commonwealth's support to Kenya and its democratic processes is evidenced by our presence here.

In March this year, the Marlborough House Dialogues, which take their name from the historic London headquarters of the Commonwealth Secretariat, welcomed Deputy President Ruto and former Prime Minister of Kenya, The Right Honourable Raila Odinga, to discuss key issues affecting the development of free and democratic societies as well as committing to a peaceful election.

Just as politicians have made a commitment to a peaceful election, we urge stakeholders, including the electorate, to commit to doing the same, consistent with the Commonwealth's values and principles.

On behalf of the Group, I would like to thank the people of Kenya for their participation and for allowing us to be a part of this important process.

Asanteni sana...

The Commonwealth Observer Group members are:

- **Chairperson:** The Honourable Bruce Golding, former Prime Minister of Jamaica
- Dr Anne Gallagher, Director-General, Commonwealth Foundation, Australia
- Mr Darrell Bradley, former Mayor of Belize City, Belize

- Dr Simon Munzu, former UN Deputy Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire, **Cameroon**
- Hon Halifa Sallah, former National Assembly Member, **The Gambia**
- Mr Jerald Joseph, former Human Rights Commissioner, **Malaysia**
- Dr Evarist Bartolo, former Foreign Minister, **Malta**
- Hon Maryan Street, former Minister of Housing, **New Zealand**
- Ms Idayat Hassan, Director, Centre for Democracy and Development, **Nigeria**
- Prof Attahiru Jega, former Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission, **Nigeria**
- Ms Nighat Dad, founder and Executive Director of Digital Rights Foundation, **Pakistan**
- Mrs Marcella Samba-Sesay, Chairperson, National Election Watch, **Sierra Leone**
- Professor Mandla Mchunu, former Chief Election Officer, **South Africa**
- Dr Victor Shale, elections and governance Expert, **South Africa**
- Mrs Fern Narcis-Scope, Chief Election Officer, Elections and Boundaries Commission **Trinidad and Tobago**
- Justice James Ogoola, former Principal Judge of the High Court, **Uganda**
- Ms Zeinab Badawi, broadcaster and President of School of Oriental and African Studies, **United Kingdom**
- Baroness Denise Kingsmill, Member of the House of Lords, **United Kingdom**
- Mr Mark Stephens CBE, Lawyer, **United Kingdom**
- Dr Chaloka Beyani, Professor of Law, London School of Economics, **Zambia**