



Interfaith Council on the National Response  
To the Corona Pandemic  
Press Statement  
11<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Our dear Kenyans, our dear sisters and brothers.

The Interfaith Council was mandated to develop guidelines for the safe and phased reopening of our places of worship. We are very aware and seriously concerned with the rising numbers of Covid-19 cases and especially those who are seriously ill and those who succumb to Covid-19. We are however trusting in God and hopeful that we will soon see the reduction in numbers and even a total containment of this pandemic.

We take this moment to thank God for His love, protection and care during this Covid-19 pandemic. We wish to console with those that have lost the beloved ones to the pandemic. We continue to pray for the infected that God will visit them in a special way and grant them healing.

We are convinced that the greatest strength we now have to fight this pandemic is prayer, asking for God's intervention both individually and as congregations in our places of worship. But at the same time, we believe that the greatest strength we have now, especially to help our people comply to the prevention measures, is the voice of our religious leaders of the different faith traditions.

That is why we celebrate the resumption of public worship and the opportunity it now gives us, so as to remind Kenyans of this most important duty of Charity or Love and protection of our neighbor. We ask the religious leaders to continue pleading and demanding from our congregants and all Kenyans, that we live this Love by doing all in our power, to fully comply with the norms of prevention given by the Ministry of Health and stipulated in the Interfaith guidelines for reopening of places of Public Worship.

During the last three weeks, the Interfaith Council had the opportunity to visit almost every County, where we met with a representative group of religious leaders from all faith traditions. We presented to them and explained the Interfaith guidelines and the reasons behind the stipulated directives. We were very glad that the guidelines and the explanations received overwhelming support. We also paid courtesy visits to both the County Governors and the County Commissioners in these jurisdictions. Again we thank



them all for their welcome and readiness to collaborate with the efforts of the interfaith council.

We specifically wish to congratulate and appreciate all Kenyans whose compliance to the guidelines in the places of worship has been exceptional, in this initial pre-opening phase. We have had over 90% compliance in the places of worship that reopening to the public. This is an exceptional performance and example to all in Nation.

We thank all religious leaders who have truly shown leadership by sometimes even going an extra mile to ensure safety of our congregants.

If we have been able to live up to the demands within our places of Worship, we must now embark at setting an example wherever we are and whenever we are in the public places.

As promised in our statement of 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020, we in the Interfaith Council have reviewed the level of compliance and the situation, in order to determine the transition to Phase One of the planned phases of opening of the Places of Public worship.

Having seen the high level of compliance in places of worship, we are convinced that the Kenyans will now follow the requirements of wearing masks, social distancing, washing of hands, and self-regulation to an acceptable degree especially in the worship gatherings in the course of the week and in their main days.

We have therefore decided to begin PHASE ONE of the opening phases will begin on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

Phase one Guidelines consist of:

- Numbers will be determined by social distancing (1.5 metres) and size of space available
- Time limit is 90 minutes
- Age limit are revised to over 6 years and under 65 years
- We shall especially take care to follow the indication of wearing face masks at all times, hand washing before and after the worship and keeping social distance. We encourage use of thermal guns.
- Please ensure regular disinfection of Places of worship

We however continue to urge all those who are elderly, sick or with health conditions, to still worship from their homes. We need to apply personal responsibility, and not expose ourselves when we are still in the rising infections.



We note sadly that the guidelines in Funerals continues to be flouted, and compliance to be way below 10%. Notably as our President Uhuru Kenyatta referred in his 27<sup>th</sup> July speech, the rules and guidelines are easily waived and flouted depending on the social status of individuals.

In this PHASE ONE that is now set to begin, the total number of attendants in funerals is set at 100 persons. This is a reasonable number that is not too constraining. We plead that we strictly follow this requirement in order to contain any infection spread through Funerals. We also insist that there should not be food sharing as the risk becomes even higher when people remove their masks to eat.

Our dear Kenyans, Covid-19 infection is a threat in whatever kind of gathering we may be in. It does not matter the status or importance of the persons involved. We wish to appeal to us all, our political leaders, our religious leaders, our dear families: We all would wish to have big occasions to bid farewell to our loved ones, but we must not create an opportunity to put others in danger because of our carelessness, and lack of discipline.

We appreciate the statements of cabinet secretaries of Health and Interior in clarifying the value and place of self-regulation by religious leaders. We call upon all the interfaith Covid committees who have been appointed at county and sub-county levels to ensure strict compliance to the guidelines.

We have also noticed that compliance to Ministry of Health Covid-19 regulations in public places continues to be very low. We appeal to you Kenyans, our dear sisters and brothers, to listen to the cry of those now suffering from Covid-19. Please listen to those struggling now in hospitals, for whom we now pray for their recovery. They keep repeating to us, that this thing is real, and we should not wish this illness to anybody. If we can avoid one more person getting it, let us do so!

It is for this reason that we, together with all religious leaders, appeal to you all once again, to make sure you wear your masks at all times when outside your home. Please use it for the love of our grand-parents, our parents and our children. This is a time of war, and we can't leave behind our weapons of Face masks well worn, social distancing and constant hand washing.

A special appeal goes to our young people. You young people are full of life, and you love being together. For this same reason, you can be an easy avenue for this virus to reach especially our elderly and sick, if you do not take precautions. Please encourage one another to wear masks, and to avoid greeting, hugging, or being together without masks



and without social distancing. You are now in the frontline of this battle and we plead with you to commit yourselves and encourage your peers to comply.

We know it is a sacrifice we must make, but for the good of our Nation and the good of each of us, let us be ready to make this sacrifice.

We urge all Kenyans whatever your faith, to continue praying to God so that He can bring to an end this terrible scourge of the Covid-19 pandemic. Let us not tire in praying, but also, let us place our utmost efforts to humanly combat this enemy.

May God be with us, with our suffering sisters and brothers, and with our Nation.

Most Rev. Anthony Muheria  
Chairman of the Interfaith Council