

**PRESS RELEASE****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****NAIROBI, KENYA: FRIDAY, 5TH MARCH 2021****RE: POLL-RELATED VIOLENCE IN THE MARCH 4<sup>TH</sup> 2021 BY-ELECTIONS**

The Commission is deeply concerned by the growing trend of lawlessness and violence witnessed before and during polling in by-elections that, if not properly checked, is likely to threaten National Security as the Country heads towards the 2022 General Election. The Commission strongly condemns all forms of electoral malpractices and in particular acts of violence against poll officials faithfully discharging their duties in the various by-elections of Thursday, March 4th 2021.

In preparation for the by-elections, the Commission undertook several measures to ensure peaceful by-elections in the country that included holding security meetings with the National and County Security organs to plan for deployment of adequate security personnel. However, an analysis of reports filed by the Commission's Returning Officers in the seven by-election areas, reveal that there were incidences of electoral violence and allegations of voter bribery in Matungu and Kabuchai Constituencies as well as in Hells Gate, London and Kiamokama County Assembly Wards. No such incidences were reported in Huruma and Kitise/Kithuki County Assembly Wards.

In Matungu Constituency, the former Cabinet Secretary for Sports, Culture and Heritage, Mr. Rashid Echesa, assaulted a poll official discharging his official duties. In the same Constituency a female poll official was also assaulted, harassed, frog-marched and insulted by a group of hooligans/goons in the company of Senator Cleophas Malala.

The Commission will in the meantime organize counseling sessions for election officials traumatized by the violence witnessed during these by-elections as it also pursues the cases of assault and destruction of electoral materials with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution. The Commission is committed to ensuring that those involved in harassing and assaulting election officials, as well as perpetrating other forms of electoral malpractice face the full extent of the law.

The Commission is currently planning for the March 18th, 2021 Machakos Senatorial by-election and takes this earliest opportunity to sternly warn politicians and members of public that NO acts of violence will be tolerated.

**W.W. CHEBUKATI**  
**CHAIRMAN IEBC**