

Kenya is ready to conduct peaceful elections, a panel of the African Union (AU) and elders of Common Market for Eastern and Southern African (Comesa) has said.

The team drawn from AU, Comesa and Inter-government Authority on Development (Igad) gave the verdict Tuesday after a week-long pre-election assessment ahead of the General Election slated for March 4.

Speaking on behalf of the delegates, Dr Brigalia Bam of the AU noted that the mission was meant to support Kenya and all political actors to create a conducive environment for holding free, transparent, credible and peaceful elections.

“The delegation noted the positive impact of the new Constitution and the growing confidence in key institutions that have undergone reforms, notably the Judiciary and the security sectors and urge for urgent and comprehensive reforms,” Dr Bam said.

During their visit, they met Chief Justice Willy Mutunga, Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) chairman Issack Hassan, Inspector General of Police David Kimaiyo, the private sector, media and civil society members.

“After exchanging view with these diverse groups of stakeholders, and witnessing political party nominations, the delegation hails the people of Kenya for the huge strides made within the last five years to address some structural causes of the post-election violence,” she said.

“The delegation reiterates the need for closer attention around issues of security, the media’s role and responsibilities, civic and voter education, and the management of the post-election phase including transparency in tallying, professionalism in reporting and management of electoral victory and failure.”

They urged the media to play a critical role in voter education by providing the electorate with relevant information as the elections draw near, noting that the new system of voting required

adequate education.

It is the first time that the country will be electing six positions all at once – president, governor, senator, MP, county representative and women's representative.

“Following our assessment, we get the impression that Kenyan people are ready to conduct these elections in a peaceful and free manner that is dignified,” Dr Simbi Mubako of Comesa said.

Dr Mubako noted that Kenya was at the heart of social and economic development of the region, and its stability was critical for the entire region.

“We need not emphasise on the strategic position of the country in determining the prosperity of the rest of the region,” he said, adding that the entire world watched with a keen eye the conduct and outcome of the elections.

Other members of the delegation included Mme Marie-Madeleine, Soad Shalaby and Anund Priyay Neewoor, who addressing journalists at the Norfolk Hotel.

A detailed report of the delegation including recommendations will be submitted to the Peace and Security Council of the AU, Comesa, Igad and the Government of Kenya.

SOURCE: [DAILY NATION - KENYA](#)