

# IGP warns parties' security groups over 'grabbing' of powers of police

By Correspondent Getrude Mbago and Tatu Bendera (TUDARCO)

THE Inspector General of Police, Ernest Mangu has warned security groups owned by political parties to stop interfering with obligations of the police, saying the groups will not be allowed to work on election day because they are not responsible for that task.

Political parties with security groups tasked to provide security to their political leaders and rallies include Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) - Green Guards, Chama Cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (Chadema) - Red Brigade and the Civic United Front (CUF) - Blue Guards.

Speaking at an election dialogue held in Dar es Salaam yesterday, IGP Mangu said the police force was well placed to guard peace and arrest anyone intending to destroy it.

Organised by Inter-Religious Council for Peace Tanzania (IRCPT), Tanzania Centre for Democracy (TCD) and Konrad-Adanaurer Stiftung (KAS) the dialogue brought together various stakeholders including religious leaders, politicians and members of the police force to discuss and share views on how they are going to preserve peace in the General Election slated for next month.

IGP Mangu said due to prevailing election tension this year, an irregular behaviour has emerged among political parties which proclaim that they will prevail at voting centres to protect their votes, a thing which is against the law.

"As police, we will take stern measures even if it means dragging to court those who will dare to go against the law," he said.

According to him, the main role of the police during elections is to maintain public order and to create, by means of effective policing, a favourable climate in which a democratic election can take place.

"We need to fulfill our obligations by safeguarding the lives and property of citizens

during the campaigns and voting, ensure safety for candidates during campaigns as well as providing security for electoral officials and election materials at polling stations," he said.

In another score, he urged religious leaders to use their spiritual and convincing power to encourage and preach preservation of peace.

He told them that the religious leaders have a high capacity to make the people psychologically prepared for any results.

For his part, IRCPT Executive Secretary Rev Thomas Godda said that as religious leaders they are eager to ensure that the country's peace is not ruined.

He said in attaining the goal they have arranged a series of dialogues in different regions countrywide so as to prepare people on how best to handle the General Election as they maintain peace.

"We are all aware that we have the obligations to ensure that 'peace' which is our golden gift is never smashed and through our sermons we will achieve this," he assured.

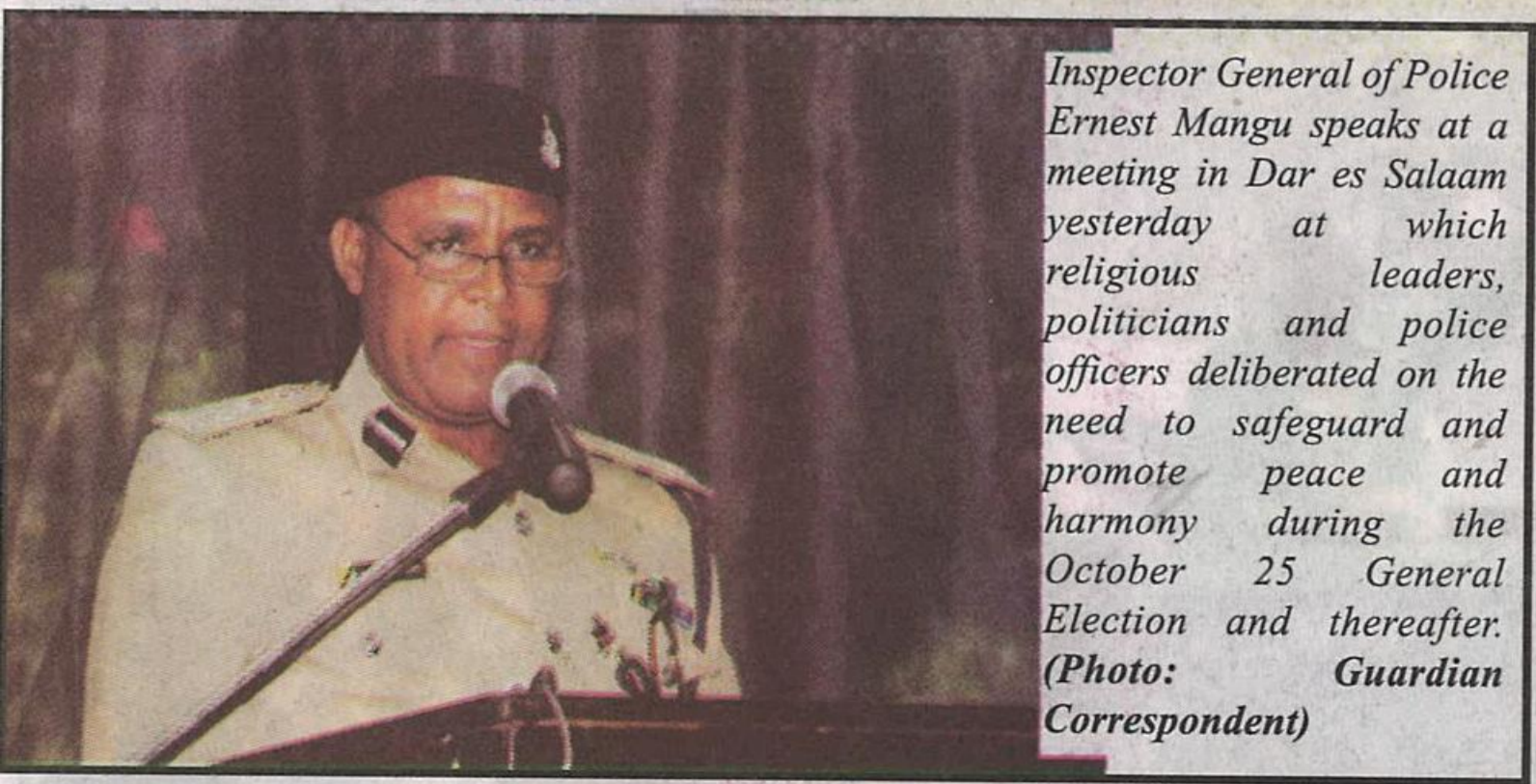
For his part, United Nations Resident Coordinator Alvaro Rodriguez said peace preservation especially in this period is very important and the UN will enhance its support in ensuring that it is maintained.

According to him, "peace is not everything but without peace everything is impossible, so everyone has to be aware of that."

"The UN has offered peace training to various police officers till now and the aim is to have 6,000 police officers countrywide," he explained.

He warned that election conflicts will endanger the nation's youth and long term future, women, children and girls will mostly be affected.

Nevertheless, he said, the primary role of preserving peace now rests with political parties and their leaders. "They will largely determine how their support and the general public will perceive the election environment and the results of the General Election.



*Inspector General of Police Ernest Mangu speaks at a meeting in Dar es Salaam yesterday at which religious leaders, politicians and police officers deliberated on the need to safeguard and promote peace and harmony during the October 25 General Election and thereafter. (Photo: Guardian Correspondent)*