



PeaceNet-Kenya

POST ELECTIONS UPDATES

A Post Electoral Violence Response Initiative project, 2008



Local reaction to power sharing deal between govt and the Opposition

Dear Partners,

With the breakthrough in the Kofi Annan led mediation talks following the post-election crisis in Kenya leading to the signing of the final deal on power sharing modalities between President Mwai Kibaki and ODM's Raila Odinga on Thursday, February 28, 2008, PeaceNet Kenya collected views from across Kenya on the immediate reaction from the communities and how such a deal could be achieved at the grass root level.

Nyanza: Business came to a stand still as region burst into song and dance

According to Nyanza PeaceNet regional coordinator, Mr Pius Omondi, great excitement engulfed the region following the signing of the power sharing deal. People in Kisumu, busted into song and dance before going into an overnight celebration spree literally.

In the Kenya-Uganda border towns (Port-Victoria and Busia), normal business came to an abrupt stop soon after people realized that the leadership agreement deal was being signed in Nairobi. Shops and other businesses were hurriedly closed down as people flocked restaurants to follow the proceedings of the signing ceremony televised live.

Most people are reported to view the signing of the deal as a sigh of relieve from the several months of anxiety and tension. It is said that most parents in the region were particularly relieved that their children would finally report back to school, more than a month since re-opening. Some parents were keen to have their children learn in schools outside the region.

In Ukunja town, some people are reported to have gone on a drinking spree to celebrate the good news, some indulging a little too far, leading to an ironical fighting in an excitement stupor.

Central Rift: Varied interpretations greeted the power sharing deal

Although most people were reported happy and optimistic that the power sharing deal would bring peace and harmony in the area, there were varied misconceptions on the implementation and the implications of the deal among the locals.

According to PeaceNet coordinator, Raphael Kinoti, some people are said to have conceived a believe that with the striking of the deal, some communities would now be officially moved out of the region and be settled elsewhere. Others are said to have got wild expectations on what they believe leaders from their communities would be given. Also, it was clear that some locals developed own conceptions of the deal, different from that at the national level.

According to Dr Kinoti, the first step towards reconciling people in the region would be to sensitize them on the right interpretations of the deal and the implications of its implementation.

Whereas the jubilation that greeted the signing of the power deal was encouraging, it should be treated with caution because, according to some people, the power sharing deal meant eviction of some communities from the region.

In less than a day of the signing of the deal, the 'traditional' clash torn areas in the region received its first clash casualties when two women residing in one of the Internally Displaced People's camp in Kuresoi area were attacked on Friday, 29, 2008 , shot with arrows and injured while attempting to access their farms to harvest potatoes. They are currently reported to be admitted at Kuresoi health centre.

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North-Rift: Power deal received with mixed reactions

Life is said to have come to a stand still in Eldoret town and its environs when locals learnt that Kibaki and Raila had agreed on a power sharing deal. This was followed by song, dance and jubilation as celebratory mood engulfed most parts of the region.

According to PeaceNet regional coordinator, Mr Jonathan Chesio, people analogized the government to a milking cow whose milk would only benefit the owner and that with the deal, their leaders would also be part of the new government, translating into local benefit. Most locals are said to view that if the deal was not reached, it meant they would have suffered for another five years.

However, some people living in the IDP camps although they were equally excited about the new development, they are reported to view the deal as a short term measure towards achieving reconciliation. They say that the inter-ethnic conflict in the area had been recurring every time there was a general election since 1992, and that a lasting solution to the problem should be obtained.

While some calls for reconciliation efforts between the warring communities, some were hesitant over such efforts and calls upon the government to resettle them elsewhere.

Western: Locals asks IDPs to resume normal life

In Western Kenya, news of the power sharing deal were received with great excitement and jubilation in major towns across Western Province.

Some people are reported to have asked the local provincial administration to let the displaced people living in IDP camps to resume their normal activities, since with the power sharing deal, they would not be attacked anymore.

South Rift: Deal a sign of new beginning

To most people in the South Rift region, the signing of the power sharing deal signified a new beginning.

With the deal, local people are said to have called off their demand that people from certain communities vacate the region.

However, with the striking of the deal, most people are reported saying they could once again live together in harmony.

Some Internally Displaced People living in the camps however, are concerned that even with the signing of the deal, their suffering had not been conclusively addressed. They view that even with the 'Nairobi accord' they may continue to suffer at the grass root level.

They say that they had suffered huge social and economic losses and that practical efforts towards helping them regain such losses should be explored.

They say that their sources of livelihoods had been adversely destroyed during the post election violence, leaving them with nothing to salvage their lives with. They say that their farm tools and implements as well as their children's school accessories were destroyed during the fracas and that they did not know how they will resume normal life.

EVRI forum has registered a website for purposes of sharing information and updates on Peace building and interventions.

Kindly send any information to: morten@peacenetkenya.org. For

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