

EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS NETWORK

Public Statement

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Kampala: EHAHRD-Net's call to the AU Heads of State Summit in Addis Ababa

Focus on the Kenyan crisis:

The East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (EHAHRD-Net) is deeply concerned about the needless yet continued killing, maiming and threatening of human rights defenders, journalists and other innocent civilians following the disputed Presidential elections.

In the past couple of weeks, the Network has received information from its members in Kenya to the effect that several individuals working to protect the rights of others have been repeatedly receiving calculated threats to their lives through anonymous phone calls or E-mails. This state of affairs has forced yet an unclear number of HRDs to leave their homes, while others have been forced to exercise undue censorship as a result of fear of possible consequences.

Whereas the Network appreciates the need for Kenyans to demand for a fair verdict in their Presidential elections, we greatly feel that the current murder and destruction trends are fast going way beyond the initial motive. EHAHRD-Net believes that the best way to resolve the current crisis is for all the conflicting groups to put their fighting tools down and embrace peaceful resolution of the issues at hand as a way to stop further blood-shed.

EHAHRD-Net commends the efforts so far made by the various prominent African and international leaders in attempting to resolve the current conflict, but demands that more international actors with a humanitarian heart, come up and commit their expertise and resources to end the current crisis. "With over 700 people killed in just one month and many others still dying on a daily basis; with hundred of innocent Kenyans injured in senseless clashes by rival tribes; with several hundreds of people forced to flee the country; and with defenders of others' rights now being targeted, every possible effort must be undertaken by the Kenyans authorities and the entire international community to ensure urgent redress," says Hassan Shire Sheikh, Chairperson of EHAHRDP/Net.

Brief Background

Following allegedly fraudulent Presidential elections held in Kenya on December 27th 2007, widespread violence erupted in various towns and has to date claimed the lives of over 850 people according to reports. The areas most affected by the violence include parts of Nairobi, Nyanza province, Western Province, the Rift Valley and the Coastal Province. This violence was fired by supporters of the opposition party, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), which has since held the position that the presidential election had been rigged in favour of President

Mwai Kibaki. Unfortunately the resultant violence has now taken a tribal trend which has now reached an extent beyond the control of both conflicting sides on the current political divide.

Recorded incidents:

EHAHRD-Net has recorded information on various threats including but not limited to the following:

Maina Kiai (m), Chairman of Kenya National Commission for Human Rights, Muthoni Wanyeki (f), Executive Director of Kenya Human Rights Commission, Nahashon Gachehe (m), employee of Independent Medico-Legal Unit, Haroun Ndubi (m), Human rights lawyer, member of Kenya Domestic Observers Forum, David Ndi (m), Author of report on electoral irregularities, Gladwell Otieno (f), Director of Africa Centre for Open Government, Ndung'u Wainaina (m), staff member of National Convention Executive Council, Njeri Kabeberi (f), Executive Director of the Centre for Multi-Party Democracy, James Maina (m), member of People's Parliament (Bunge La Mwananchi), among others.

APPEAL:

EHAHRD-Net appeals to the African Union leaders currently meeting in Addis Ababa, and the entire international community, to jointly condemn the current heinous incidents in Kenya and to put together their efforts to ensure immediate redress of the current crisis.

EHAHRD-Net also calls upon the authorities in Kenya to urgently ensure the safety and protection of human rights defenders and pro-democracy activists in Kenya; and calls upon the authorities to investigate these threats and bring those responsible to justice through fair trials;

The Network further appeals to all its members to write to the Kenyan authorities urging them to immediately call the country back to order by embracing peaceful resolution measures to the current conflict.

Send appeals to:

H.E. Alpha Oumar Konaré
President of the Commission of the African Union
African Union Headquarters
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax: (251)11 551 3036
Salutation: Your Excellency

c.c Hon. Mwai Kibaki C.G.H. M.P
President of Kenya
PO Box 30510-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
Fax: 011 254 2031 3600
Email: pps@statehousekenya.go.ke
Salutation: Your Excellency

c.c Major General Mohamed Hussein Ali, M.G.H.
Commissioner of Police
PO Box 30083, Nairobi, Kenya
Fax: 011 254 2024 0955
Salutation: Dear Commissioner

c.c Hon. Prof George Saitoti
Minister of State for Internal Security
Harambee House, Harambee Avenue
P. O. Box 30510-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
Fax: 011 254 2031 3600
Salutation: Dear Minister

c.c Maina Kiai
Chairperson, Kenya National Commission for Human Rights
PO Box 74359 – 00200, Nairobi, Kenya
Fax: 011 254 2027 16160
Email: mkiai@knchr.org

You are also encouraged to send similar appeals to the local Kenyan Mission in your own country