



International Center for Policy and Conflict

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**June 23, 2009**  
**Press Statement**

**KENYA POLITICAL CRISIS; FRAGILE STABILITY REQUIRE SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT**

**NAIROBI, June 23, 2009:** The International Center for Policy and Conflict (ICPC) urges for sustained engagement with the fragile and deceitful political stability in Kenya. For years, government of Kenya, despite promises, has demonstrated a sustained and partisan failure to investigate, prosecute or punish serious criminal offences as well as facilitate comprehensive constitutional and institutional reforms causing perpetual rights abuses, culture of impunity, and near state collapse. And contrary to the perception being created, Kenya is still facing tremendous challenges if it is to attain the sustainable peace. It is one thing to establish commissions or task forces but a completely different thing to genuinely address the causes of the perennial political crises and violence, reconciling communities, and preventing future conflicts in the country.

The peace process in Kenya is still at crossroads, requiring more than ever, a vigorous continued support of the international community for national efforts to keep the reform processes on track and avoid a relapse into conflict. ICPC considers Kenya, at the moment, a patient under very strong sedative medication causing false normalcy. The Coalition Government is being treated as an end rather than means to an end; the country is witnessing increased militarization and crime; Internally Displaced Persons still stand, only that dynamics have changed from big to transitory camps with no serious impetus to address the humanitarian situation and sustainably settle them; local and national reconciliation is far from beginning with no proper, coherent and organized dialogues as well as soft infrastructure to facilitate genuine reconciliation and accountability as commissions and laws won't reconcile the nation without sufficient backing of political will and necessary soft infrastructure; power sharing remains an illusion without internal coherent and functional decision making and conflict /dispute resolution mechanisms; and finally democracy is being subverted through rule by commissions instead of building proper functioning and accountable state institutions. We fear that referendum would be very problematic considering the country is still divided buttressed by poisoned political environment.

The most pressing challenge, we believe, remains the need to take concrete steps, beyond political rhetoric, to seriously address the real causes of violence and culture of impunity. In that regard, we are calling for sustained efforts by the government of Kenya, civil society, media and international community to focus on certain key priorities namely: resolving conclusively the chronic internal displacement and political violence; accountability and justice; comprehensive and bold security sector reforms i.e. police, judiciary and correctional services; governance and the rule of law; economic expansion and growth; and structural inequalities and unemployment. For that strategic partnership to produce the expected results, it is vital that both the Government and the people of Kenya on the one hand, and the international community, on the other, recommit to playing their respective roles to genuinely help rebuild a stable, prosperous and democratic Kenya.

ICPC also highlights the urgent need for implementation of humane disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programme of the militia groups, and the restoration of fundamental rights as other critical steps for building sustainable peace and security in Kenya. In addition, we voice concern about the persistence of impunity, which leads to the creation of a climate in which massive human rights violations, corruption and disrespect for the rule of law tend to fester and flourish, and contribute to desperation, disillusionment and disappointment.

It is essential, if peace is to endure, to ensure that those accused of violating the law, including international humanitarian law, are promptly brought to justice. Kenya has little hope of preventing future violent conflict, or reassuring those who live in fear of its recurrence, if people who have committed this most heinous of crimes are left at large, and not held to account. It is therefore vital that Kenya build and maintain robust judicial systems so that, over time, people will see there is no impunity for such crimes.

International Center for Policy and Conflict warns that there is imminent danger of recurrence of violence in Kenya as social despair provides fertile soil for conflict, especially when irrigated with undemocratic governance and violations of human rights. Better early warning mechanisms, ending impunity and other measures are all important for impeding the road to vicious violence but the real key is political will to act promptly and decisively on the prerequisite reforms. What happened on 2007/08 in Kenya was the indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians and the committing of massive human rights violations, disguised as election dispute, due to state failure to undertake the necessary reforms. However, beyond political affirmations, there is little confidence that government of Kenya is yet to be able to thwart a similar horror.

**Signed**  
**Ndung'u Wainaina**  
**Executive Director**