



# Kenya National Commission on Human Rights

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## Persistent Insecurity in the North Rift

1. The KNCHR wishes to express its concern on the security situation within the North Rift Region which has led to loss of life, property, displacement, disrupted education and healthcare. The commission wishes to send its sincere and deepest commiserations to the affected communities and families as a result of the ongoing and recurrent conflict in the North Rift region.
2. The Commission has previously received a petition from members of these communities in particular from Baringo South about escalating insecurity. The petition alleged that the insecurity commenced in 2005 in the guise of cattle rustling and who's underlying root causes include; boundary disputes, political incitement, and proliferation of firearms as well as scramble for scarce natural resources such as water and pasture which are major sources of livelihood among these pastoralist communities.
3. Following recurrent reports and petitions to the Commission and prior to the recent attacks, the Commission in furtherance of its mandate as a watchdog institution, issued an advisory to the then Inspector General in 2014 which highlighted the pattern and frequency of attacks in Baringo South region in 2012 – 2013. The Commission has made visits to the region, monitored, investigated and documented the security situation in the region. This formed part of the recently released report '*A country under Siege: The state of Security in Kenya-an Occasional Report (2010 – 2014)*' on the security situation in Kenya.
4. Some of the affected areas include Kapedo, Nadome, Kiserian, Mukutani, Logumgum, Arabal, Ng'elecha, Chebinyiny, Kasiela, Yatya and Loruk. It is alleged that over 20000 civilians including the vulnerable, women and children have been displaced. KNCHR on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015 visited Loruk and Yatya areas of Baringo County. The visit established that people have been displaced, lost animals, schools and dispensaries closed as a consequence of frequent violent attacks. Despite the government assurances that they have beefed up security, there are still continued attacks attacks in areas like Chemoi. People are still living in constant fear and are reluctant to go back to their homes despite constant assurances of police presence and safety.

5. Learning in the affected areas has been grounded with over 30 schools inclusive of secondary schools closed. In Yatya area, 5 schools are reported to have been closed as a result of the ongoing attacks. Further, incidences of school vandalism have been reported with allegations of installed solar panels and Iron sheets in schools being stolen.
6. The Yatya Mixed Secondary and Yatya Primary school are currently sheltering displaced community members especially the most vulnerable including the elderly, women and children. Over 800 households are reportedly displaced in Yatya and are not accessing the basic supplies.
7. There is a looming humanitarian crisis due to the displacements. Access to health care has also been greatly hampered. Currently, the families camping at Yatya Primary School require urgent food and non-food items including medicine, mosquito nets and blankets. Livelihoods in the affected regions have been disrupted since Communities are not able to continue farming with the ongoing rains.
8. Of concern is a new turn to impromptu attacks targeting road users especially between Loruk and Tangelbei and Loruk Chemolingot route. Most recently a public service vehicle plying the route was shot at and a passenger injured. It was also reported that The National Drought Management Authority staff vehicle was also attacked and a staff injured.
9. The Commission is also concerned with the continued targeting of security agencies by bandits in the region. The Commission condemns such acts and calls upon the public to respect the security personnel and afford them the necessary support.

### **KNCHR Recommendations**

In light of the above foregoing, the commission recommends as follows;

1. On short term, the government undertakes an appropriate and expeditious security response in the affected regions to immediately contain the continued violence and protect the lives and properties of the affected communities. On long term, the government conducts a disarmament exercise in line with the law. Further, that accountability be demanded of the security agents and all actors on the ground concerning efforts to restore order in the area.
2. That County, National Governments' and other stakeholders urgently intervene in the provision of humanitarian assistance to the displaced persons who are in need of food, non-food items and basic health services.
3. The Government puts in mechanisms to ensure long lasting peace in the region and to promote peaceful co-existence of the Pokot, Tugen and Ilchamus communities within

Baringo County. There should be efforts to bring on board elders from the affected communities and local leaders to develop lasting solution to the conflict.

4. That learning in the affected regions resumes as soon as possible to ensure access to education is not compromised. That schools be provided with adequate security to resume learning and avoid vandalism of school property. Further, other institutions that are closed including health facilities be reopened to provide the necessary services to the affected communities.
5. That political leadership and accountability be upheld against those adversely mentioned and implicated. Further necessary legal measures be taken against those suspected of being behind the ongoing attacks.

In conclusion, we urge the government to strategically categorize varied facets of insecurity in the country in order to craft specific actions for each region as each has different triggers. The Commission acknowledges and appreciates the Red Cross and other humanitarian agencies for the humanitarian support provided to the affected communities. In the meantime, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights will continue to monitor the happenings, engage with the relevant government agencies plus the affected communities and will undertake the necessary measures within its mandate to address the situation.

Ends: //.....

Signed

Chivusia Suzanne Shatikha

Commissioner, KNCHR