

Urgent Call for Action by WEDO:
Stop the Violence in Kenya
4 January 2008

Kenya's recent elections have resulted in 13 new parliamentary seats won by women candidates so far. But although this should be a time for celebration for women of Kenya and the world, the re-election of President Mwai Kibaki has devastated the country. Violence has swept through Kenya, long considered the most stable country in Africa, since opposition leaders disputed the election outcomes. Women in particular have been targeted: raped, tortured and forced into 'house arrest'.

The Women's Environment and Development Organization urges human rights organizations and individuals, women leaders and activists, to join in the Call for Action for peace and reconciliation in Kenya.

Kenya has been heralded as an example of a successful democracy in Africa. "This is a country that has been held up as a model of stability," said South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu to BBC. "This picture has been shattered."

On January 3rd, BBC News noted that 300 people have been killed and over 70,000 displaced already, the majority of whom are women and children. Women in the country have been subjected to looting, burning and rape and, because the transport system is barely functioning, many are unable to get to nearby hospitals. Nevertheless, one hospital reported a near doubling in the amount of rape victims it treated in one day.

This outbreak of politically and ethnically motivated violence is an unacceptable attack on women's human rights and is an attempt to frustrate women's political participation, scaring women from politics and from monitoring the results yet to be published in some regions.

There is an urgent and dire need for political leaders on both sides to dialogue for peace. Negotiations cannot take place as Kenyans are slaughtered and the country burns.

WEDO calls for the international community's urgent intervention to end the violent attacks on innocent Kenyans, particularly women. We must send this message to President Mwai Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga now.

To add your endorsement to this Call for Action, please send an email to lucy@wedo.org.

Endorsements

Rosalind Petchesky, Distinguished Professor of Political Science Hunter College & the Graduate Center, City University of New York

Mary Keane, NGO TUP/ECOSOC

Saskia Ivens, International Development Consultant - Gender Equality, Ottawa, Canada

Jing de la Rosa, Chair Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN)

Priscilla M. Achakpa, Women Environmental Programme Nigeria

Lies Jansen, The Netherlands WILPF-member

Patricia Willis, Chair Feminist Caucus of the American Humanist Association

Andrea Johnston, President and Co-Founder Girls Speak Out, San Francisco

Joan Cornish Watson, ACT Australia

Lesley Grahame, BA RGN

Ann Smith, Co-Director, Circle Connections

Teresa Descilo, Executive Director, Victim Services - The Trauma Resolution Center

Ariel Dougherty, Media Equity Collaborative; co-founder, Women Make Movies, USA

Lorna Owens, Founder, And the Women Gather; Host, And the Women Gather 1080 WMCU.COM

Deborah A. Ballam, Associate Provost for Women's Policy Initiatives, Director, The Women's Place Professor, Fisher College of Business, The Ohio State University

Sharon Riegie Maynard, sisterspace.net

Catherine Mabobori, Burundi member of Parliament, President, Women's Parliamentarians Association; Federation of African Women Peace Network

Jean Shinoda Bolen, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, University of California Medical Center San Francisco, Millionth Circle Initiative

Judy Ranieri, Women's Intercultural Network, California USA

Olya Booyar, President, International Association of Women in Radio and Television

Gerrie Rosen, Director, Refugee Safe Haven African Community Resource Center

Anthony Johnson Akpan, President, Pan African Vision for the Environment (PAVE), Nigeria

Mia MacDonald, Brighter Green, New York

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Juno S. Englander, Global Mothers

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Bonnie Berry, UN Representative, Women's Federation for World Peace International

Susan Bradbury, President, The Sound Essence Project

Patricia Couweleers, Member, Women's Federation for World Peace, USA

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Joyce McLean, The Santa Cruz California Branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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Mama Koité Doumbia, President, FEMNET, Kenya

Marilyn Fowler, President/CEO, Women's Intercultural Network (WIN)
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President, Coalition of Women from Asia and the Middle East
Maria Jett, Managing Editor, World Pulse Media

And numerous individuals, not affiliated directly with or on behalf of organizations