
Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation (IHJR)

and

Forum for Society and History (FSH)

IDP'S NARRATIVES AS POLITICAL DISCOURSE OF IDENTITY

**INTERVIEWS WITH INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN KENYA
RESULTING FROM THE POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE OF
2007-2008**

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Preface

The post-election violence in Kenya in 2007-2008 brought to the foreground the existing ethnic tensions within the country. For a short period of time due to international media coverage of the events, the world was shocked by the ethnic violence that arose in a country which many deemed to be a stable and united entity. The violence was followed by the displacement of men, women, children and whole families - it is estimated that there are over 600,000 IDPs (internally displaced persons) as a result of the post-election violence. The experiences these people had during and since their displacement are of great importance for the process of creating common understanding and reconciliation within the country.

In this context, the IHJR would like to present *IDP's Narratives as Political Discourse of Identity: Interviews with Internally Displaced Persons in Kenya Resulting from The Post-Election Violence of 2007-2008*. This valuable compilation of narratives could not have been achieved without the great and dedicated input of the two editors of this publication, Hassan Mwakimako and George Gona. Working with these authors was a true pleasure and stimulating experience as they belong to a new generation of scholars that inspire and bring critical analysis to public debate. Hassan Mwakimako's creative thinking makes him one of the most valued historians of his generation.

This unique project used in-depth interviews with IDPs to understand and explore their perceptions on the post-election violence in Kenya. The researchers managed to portray different narratives and experiences of IDPs in Kenya, but at the same time find commonalities between these narratives and experiences. The results clearly show that there are common grievances that have not yet properly been addressed.

The IHJR has worked previously in different conflict areas to dispel dangerous historical myths and to understand the complexity and variety of historical narratives that exist within societies and nations. The Kenyan IDPs in this study again show the importance of exploring narratives to understand shared and common understandings of identity, while at the same time accepting the plurality of identities. The IDPs in this project emphasize that it was not only

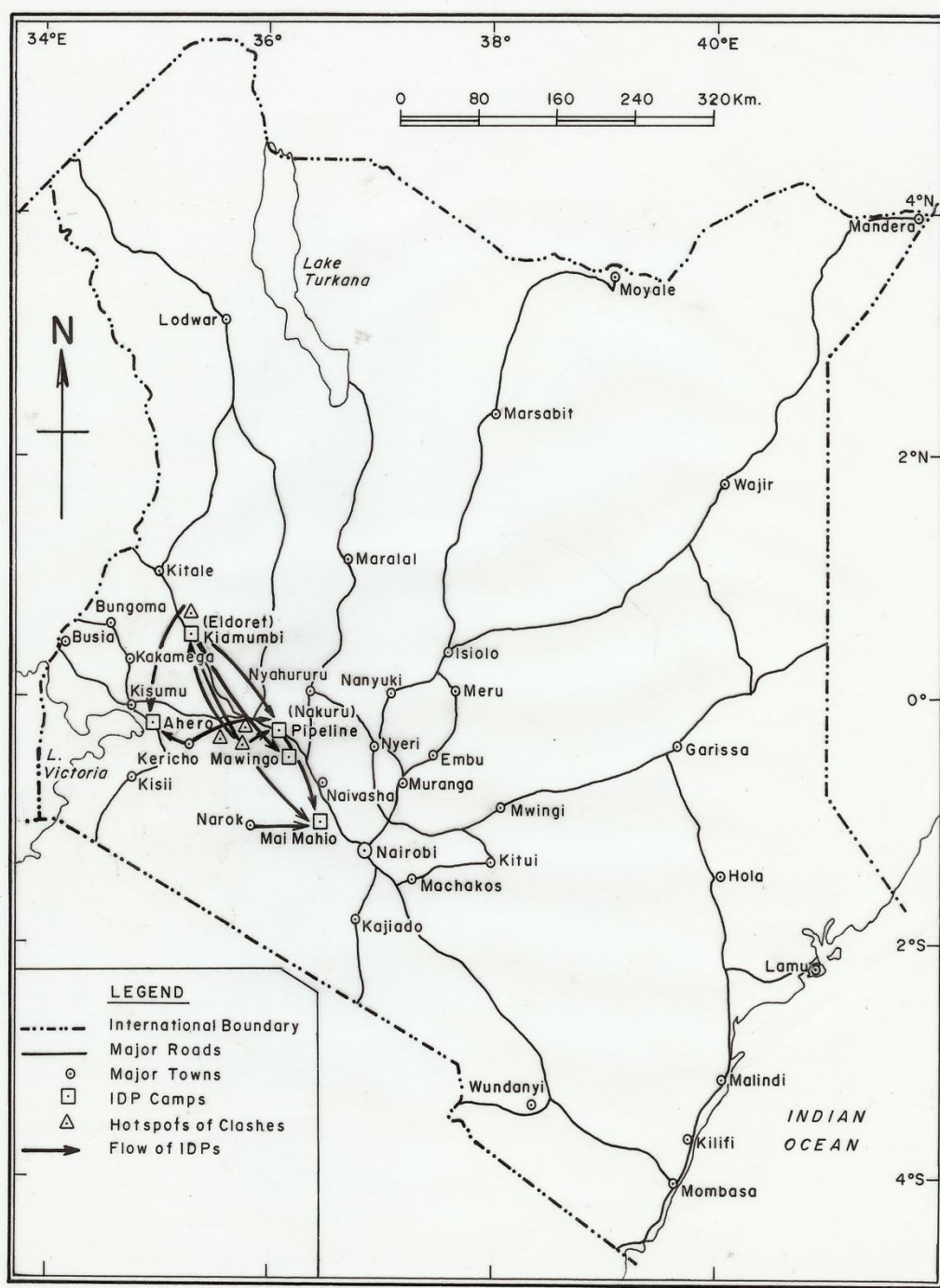
political conflict that brought on the violence, but also harmful historical narratives on ethnic identity.

We hope that the project will not only serve as a part of the reconciliation process in Kenya, but also as a symbol for the importance of historical mythmaking in conflicts, as well as the often forgotten and marginalized existence of IDPs within conflicts and post-conflict peace-building efforts.

Catherine Cissé-van den Muijsenbergh

Executive Director

Areas affected by post-election violence and the subsequent movement of IDPs



Abbreviations

DC	District Commissioner
DO	District Officer
FSH	Forum for Society and History
GoK, GK	Government of Kenya
IDP	Internal Displaced Person
IHJR	Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KNCHR	Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
MoSSP	Ministry of State for Special Programmes
OCPD	Officer Commanding Police Division
OCS	Officer Commanding Station
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
PEV	Post-Election Violence
PNU	Party of National Unity

Summary

Internal Displacement in Kenya is not a new phenomenon. It gained ascendancy in the 1990s following politically instigated ethnic clashes at the advent of multi-party politics. Displacement grew rapidly after 1992 with each election recording incidents of violence. Little was done to address the problem; the only notable action of the government being the setting up of a Parliamentary Commission (the Kennedy Kiliku Commission) in 1992 to investigate the clashes. The problem reached its peak during the post-election violence (PEV) of December 2007 and early 2008. According to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) this case of PEV was a culmination of unresolved social, economic and political issues that over time were neglected by incumbent governments. This entrenched a system of impunity in which human rights violations went unpunished.

The narratives collected and presented in this report show that the experiences of IDPs since the 1990s underscore the expectations placed on Kenyan political authorities to respect the fundamental human rights of these persons. That the Kenyan government has been slow in reacting to the plight of the displaced, perhaps justifies international intervention in this area. Yet, the idiom of political sovereignty will always be an impediment to such plans.

The IDPs interviewed for this report exemplify the plight of those Kenyan citizens who were cut off from their land: their traditional livelihoods and means of generating income, and compelled to leave all but a few possessions behind. This report tells of IDPs who suddenly found themselves stripped of their means of survival. Equally, internal displacement broke up families and community support networks. This in turn has had wide ranging effects including impoverishment, social isolation, exclusion from health and welfare services, the ending of education, the breakdown of social relationships and support structures, and the undermining of authority structures and social roles.

From these narratives it appears that the IDPs often discuss what exactly it means to be an IDP; the camps in a way becoming centers of thought and discussion concerning their new identities. Politics then becomes an avenue through which exclusion is expressed: “We were expelled from our abode

because we voted for the “wrong candidate””. The repetitive narrative of IDPs that they did not belong to the Rift Valley and that they were “*madoa doa*” (non-Kalenjin peoples in the Rift Valley) epitomizes the discourse of exclusion that is common among Kenyans and goes in counter with the notion of one nation.

The most revealing theme emerging from these narratives is that IDPs are questioning the constitutional promise that a Kenyan can live, settle and establish a home in any part of Kenya. For IDPs the reality of their displacement mirrors the opposite and raises the critical question of the government’s ability or lack of it, to implement the Constitution. Furthermore, the majority of displaced persons interviewed for this report suggested that they would “think twice” so to say about settling “anywhere” in the country. This complete distrust of the government does of course not bode well for nation-building.

IDPs living in camps constantly express feelings of neglect. They single out the government for not doing enough to provide them with the support to re-build their lives. The narratives reveal a list of shame that does not spare the highest office of the land, the President. Reverberations of “even the President whom we voted for has not shown interest in assisting us” were common among IDPs.

Corruption too is expressed in the IDP narratives. Complaints of non-payment of the so-called resettlement fund, particularly from ethnic groups other than those from Central Kenya were rife. Furthermore, the selective response of the government angered many IDPs who did not move to camps. For instance, in Nyanza, IDPs who were taken in by relatives, friends or local residents felt equally as isolated as their fellow IDPs. They had relocated to what were considered “ancestral homes” and thus the government felt that they were not displaced persons.

The IDPs feel that it is important to identify themselves as a distinct group whose needs warrant specific attention because they were the victims of a deliberate policy targeting them for displacement and forced relocation. Many of the displaced also feel that they have security and material needs beyond the

protection of other civilians. They were of the opinion that as IDPs they have different, and often more urgent needs.

In their discussions and narratives, the idea of returning to their former abodes is often not highlighted and neither is it prioritized as a solution to their predicament. There is a sense of disillusionment and a lack of confidence and faith in the justice system. Exercising the IDP's "Right of Return" has also been a thorn in the side of their efforts to reconcile with what has happened. For instance, the IDPs cannot reconcile with their tormentors who are hundreds of kilometers away. They also feel that the government is guilty of encouraging impunity since it cannot enforce the call for IDPs to return to their homes. As one IDP cautiously suggested: "There are forces stronger than the government who are opposed to IDPs returning to their farms".

1. Introduction

The announcement of the presidential Election results on 30 December 2007 triggered an unprecedented amount of PEV across Kenya. The violence lasted for nearly two weeks and had a strong ethnic dimension which led to the displacement of persons, death and wanton destruction of property. According to the Ministry of State for Special Programmes (MoSSP) there are 663,921 IDPs in Kenya as a result of PEV. Nearly half of these IDPs (313,921) fled to host communities and integrated within them while around 350,000 sought refuge in 118 camps. During the two weeks of PEV, an estimated 78,254 houses were burned down countrywide and over 1,300 men, women and children lost their lives. Following the mediation attempts by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the parties Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and the Party of National Unity (PNU) agreed to end the conflict and formed a Government of National Unity to run the affairs of the country. Peace was obtained, but not for those who were still in IDP camps.

On 5 May 2008, four months after the PEV began, the Government of Kenya launched Operation Rudi Nyumbani (Return Home) to encourage the displaced to return to their former homes. The government estimates that Operation Rudi Nyumbani has facilitated the return of 350,000 IDPs to their homes; yet, many still remain displaced and are living in poor conditions. IDPs who are not sure of their safety and security are uncomfortable to return to their former homes. Many have formed self-help groups¹ and have utilized the grant of about 35,000 shillings to pool together and purchase small pieces of land to “resettle” themselves and begin new lives.

This report highlights how the IDPs understand and narrate their experience and is based on a study commissioned by the Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation (IHJR), The Hague and undertaken by historians from the Forum

¹ At the time of writing there are still 19 such Self Help Groups.

for Society and History (FSH), Kenya.² The aims, objectives and rationale behind the collection of IDP's narratives were:

- To collect, record and document narratives of identity and nationhood from individuals, families and communities who have experienced and suffered from displacements as a result of conflict over land, culture, identity and politics that arose from the disputed election results of December 2007.
- To produce an array of discursive narratives and experiences, within which the commonalities of displacement as experienced by IDPs are constituted and understood.
- To underscore that narrating stories of individual experiences of displacement provides one of many avenues through which interventions can be made and/or suggested.
- To chronicle the narratives of the IDPs own voices and perspectives in order to dispel harmful myths and
- To use the narratives to enable the sharing of a common understanding of identity, belonging and nationhood.

People and communities have been displaced from their homes or places of residence in Kenya from the colonial period to the present. During the colonial period, displacement occurred in order to pave the way for the settlement of white settlers and forest conservations. Displacement also occurred because of inter-ethnic conflict over grazing grounds, scarce watering areas, cattle rustling and banditry and natural disasters including floods and drought. In the recent past, Kenyans experienced displacement as a result of political conflict particularly focused around election results. The December 2007 crisis was a result of the disagreement and lack of clarity on election results. Consequently, the announcement of the results by the defunct electoral body led to the eruption of PEV.

²Interviews with IDPs were conducted by Hassan Mwakimako, George Gona, Isaak Tarus and Feslistus Kinyanjui.

Subsequently displaced families, individuals and communities were sheltered in transitional camps. Since then, these evictees and victims of PEV acquired the tag of being IDPs. This tag has become an analytically useful construct; it connotes a generalized “kind” and “type” of person, family, community or condition. Yet, on the other, it may be that IDP includes a rubric that comprises within it a world of different personal, family and community histories and experiences.

During the period in which conversations with IDPs were held, it was clear to us that, in Kenya, people and communities have both voluntarily and involuntarily been moving or have moved over a long period of time. As such every moment of their historical movement makes latter displacements one aspect of a much larger constellation of socio-political and cultural processes. The displacement that occurred after the disputed election results has generated the inescapable relevant context of questions about the experiences of the IDPs. These include issues such as the violations of human rights, the loss of dignity, challenges to nationhood, state sovereignty, citizenship, and cultural identities, all which show in the broader context narratives of contest over memory, identity and history.

The displacement of persons spurred the FSH to undertake a process where the IDPs were allowed, and were assisted, where possible, to reclaim their lives by voicing their experiences through narratives. To achieve this task the FSH is involved in a two pronged processes:

- Firstly, using historians to study, understand, analyze and present narrative containing the knowledge and descriptions of the spaces and times of actual displacements.
- Secondly, engineering and leading a process of recording narratives involving the tracing of movements over time, expressions of dangers, and anxiety and moments of overcoming fear and facing opportunities.

In order to achieve those objectives the FSH conducted interviews and conversations with IDPs living in transition camps and those settled in homes in

Nauru, Mai Mahiu, Eldoret, and Kisumu during the period April-August 2010. The highlights of these interviews and conversations are summarized in this report.

2. The IDPs in Kenya – the context, narratives and meanings

International standards define internally displaced persons as the following:

*persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.*³

There is no specific cessation clause defining the end of internal displacement in international law, potential solutions are identified as incorporating either return to former areas of residence or resettlement into another part of the country voluntarily, in safety and with dignity. National authorities are obliged to support reintegration by ensuring that IDPs are protected against discrimination, are able to participate fully in public affairs and can enjoy access to public services. It is stipulated that national authorities' responsibilities include facilitating the recovery or compensation of property which was dispossessed as a result of displacement. In response to such expectations, the Kenyan government has taken some steps to assist the IDPs. This has included a profiling exercise to determine the exact numbers of IDPs, token assistance to help with resettlement and the gradual development of a policy to address the problem of internal displacement in the form of a draft national policy on the issue.⁴ These efforts are commendable, yet they lack the very voice of the individual person who has faced displacement and is forced to deal with its realities. It is only when this is done that the phenomenon of displacement can be understood in its entirety. It is as a result of the desire to bring out the voice of the individuals within the group of IDPs that the FSH presents these narratives as an attempt to provide a wealth of

³United Nations, *Guiding Principles on International Displacement* (2004), p. 1. A copy of this document can be accessed from <<http://www.unhcr.org/43ce1cff2.html>>

⁴See Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), *Draft National Policy on Internal Displacement* (simplified version) (2011).

information about the way IDPs interpret their lives. Furthermore, these narratives reveal the conceptual frameworks they employ to make sense of their relations to others, while their construction of the “self”, the “group” and the “other” relates to shifting relations of power and domination within and beyond the IDPs spatial settlements. In the process of collecting these narratives, we traced the experiences of IDPs as they narrated an indigenous discourse, revealing an articulation of social boundaries, outlining the system of meaning that lends significance to collective identities, and ultimately exploring how the subjective significance of ethnic categories is produced. From the first reading of the results of the interviews it became clear that they were largely “identity narratives” based on the changes and transformations of Kenya history.

The official discourse of identity of the independence period has subsumed notions of ethnic group identity under the unified idea of national community. The experience of IDPs and the manner in which they articulate their identity narratives shows that notions of ethnic categorizations and subjective definitions of collective identities still remain argued and reconfigured in novel and unexpected ways. The discourse between the FSH researchers and the IDPs shows that ethnic categorization was already in force in Kenya, but it was altered in the time of violence, movement, and resettlement, largely in response to changes in the political economy.

The Mai Mahiu, Nakuru, and Eldoret IDP camps and transitional homes are spaces of emergent communities of marginalized identities within the nation. Yet, the marginalization emboldens individual members to understand personal experience as grounds for action and social change. The FSH found that IDP settlements at Jikaze and Vumilia are spaces of an emerging local “discursive threshold” where IDPs narrated, discussed and examined their status. Jikaze and Vumilia are transition camps which stimulate acts of remembrance as well as offering its members a newly valued position from which to speak and to address their togetherness and identity.

Through acts of remembering, individuals at *Jikaze* and the communities of *Vumilia* take time to narrate alternative and counter-histories as people who come from the margins, yet their narratives also include other kinds of subjective

identities such as: the tortured, maimed, raped, the displaced and overlooked, the silenced and the unacknowledged. Their stories reflect new forms of identity in which their future has been radically altered.

The interviews reveal that people who are settled in the camps as IDPs are almost always the poorest members of society. These are people who have not benefitted from the bright future delivered to others Kenyans from the prosperity of independence, the development of capital and the power and authority of the state. When IDPs tell their stories they narrate a part of their lives; a part which needs to be heard by a wider audience. Living in the IDP camps has provided these Kenyans with an opportunity to speak about their communal identities in the face of loss and cultural degradation. In the midst of the dislocation, the IDP's personal and collective narratives have become ways in which they claim new identities and assert their participation in the political sphere. As well as this, individuals and groups of IDPs also engage in critically demonstrative and narrative acts in which they assert their cultural difference and right to be different. In the camps and transitional settlements IDPs struggle to leave the past behind and embrace their newly experienced collective subjectivity.

Life narratives of the IDP's also provide ways in which they imagine the security of a common past in the midst of its fragmentation and the pace of change of the present. For them, memory is a metaphor for a broader uncertainty about how to frame the past; their narratives of personal remembrance becoming ways that they know the past differently in the present. In most cases, storytelling has functioned for the IDPs as a crucial method of establishing new identities of belonging (directed towards the past) and belonging (directed toward the future). This was common at Jikaze and Vumilia where individuals narrated stories and experiences that were used by them to show the moments when democracy in Kenya failed. Their stories undermine the common and unified narrative of national belonging.

3. Methodological considerations

The data on which this report is presented was collected through a qualitative research method comprising of oral interviews with men, women and youth IDPs. The narratives of IDPs living in transitional camps dotting the Mai Mahiu-Nakuru Road and at the Vumilia and Jikaze IDP transition camps were included in the study. In Nakuru, interviews with IDPs were conducted at Pipeline IDP Camp. While most of the displaced ended up in camps, others chose not to. Such IDPs were interviewed in Kisumu in the Ahero area. In an attempt to bring communities of IDPs together to share experiences, focused group discussions were held with both male and female IDP leaders from the Vumilia transitional camp. One-on-one interviews were also held with young people from the ages of 18-21. Most were high school drop-outs, although some were attending mid-level college. In total, interviews were held with 65 persons, of which, 35 were chosen for inclusion in this report.

These narratives were collected through conversations with IDPs who were asked leading questions and allowed to narrate their own stories. They uncover and recapitulate the dynamics of Kenya's PEV and in so doing, contribute to the knowledge of violent conduct. The narratives also offer the possibility of seeing the social and cultural grounds on which they rest and make visible the dynamic interactions that shape them.

The process of collecting the narratives posed its own challenges to the researchers; particularly the difficulty of doing ethnological research in a volatile environment. This became evident especially with IDPs who shared their thoughts on the hardest moments of the conflict. Thus, the process of collecting these narratives brought the historian face to face with the practical difficulties of conducting "fieldwork under fire".⁵ Collecting these narratives also raised appropriate ethical and methodological questions based on doubts about the

⁵See Nordstrom, C. and A.C.G.M. Robben, *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). See also Greenhouse, C. J., E. Mertz and K.B. Warren (eds.) *Ethnography in Unstable Places: Everyday Lives in Contexts of Dramatic political change* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

impossibility of representing violence.⁶ However, the responses to violence as encountered by the IDPs and as narrated to us in the field, gave us the view that in contrast to conceptualizing violent events as a breakdown, the absence of sociality or as the evacuation of meaning, such violence is moreover a representation and demarcation of social processes. Too often violence is rendered analytically meaningless because of a failure to see in it the kinds of feedback loops of representation and imaginations more easily discerned in other social drama.⁷ The method used to collect the narratives presented in this report allows a tracing of the feedback loops in order to explore their contributions to understanding conflict situations, what futures they foresee, and what analytical devices might entangle them.

The narratives collected always began with the IDPs talking about ethnographic issues. Rather than being read as a performance of the victims, this report invites readers to explore the two-sided nature of the violence with conflict protagonists on both sides emerging. Collecting these narratives was like writing a genealogical account of the conflict as experienced by the IDPs. Thus, it involved tracing the many twists and turns of the period.

⁶See Scarry, E., *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). See also A. Kleinman, V. Das and M. Lock, *Social Suffering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997)

⁷D. Hoffmann, 'Violent Events as Narrative Blocs: The Disarmament at Bo, Sierra Leone', *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No.2 (2005), pp. 329-53.

4. Interpretation of violence as a political discourse of identity

The narratives presented here are suggested as analytical devices that could be used by policymakers to explore conflict situations. These narratives are representations that take into account the epistemic murkiness⁸ that attends violent conflict; they offer a valuable perspective for analyzing representations of conflict situations. There are suggestions that violence defies explanation, that sometimes testimonies of experiences of violence can be marginalized or silenced and also that the experiences of violence can shape social subjectivity. These narratives present how violent conflict as explained and articulated by the IDPs in Kenya produced effects that merit further inquiry on the conflict.

In these narratives, the expulsion of some communities and the subsequent creation of an IDP identity is represented as a consequence of ongoing conflict that strongly indicates that representation and historical narratives are part of the conflict they depict. All the narratives constitute proclamations of grievances, the construction of histories and the legitimization of the conflict by protagonists on various sides. In the end, the conflict situations are produced and perpetuated by various narratives of successive events that stand, not as object and descriptions, but as spirals of interpretation and action. The narratives are true and very real but this is no evidence that they correctly represent the conflict in its entirety, but are rather signs of their discursive power to reproduce themselves.

Throughout the process of collecting the narratives, there were claims that the evictions which occurred after the disputed election were planned. These claims provided the researcher with the idea that the events that were being narrated had their own history. This means that the political violence experienced by IDPs is repeatedly reconstructed through convoluted collusions between the IDPs as antagonists whose power to narrate is predicated on the existence of the other.

⁸M. Tausigg, 'Culture of Terror- Space of Death: Roger Casement's Putumayo Report and the Explanation of Torture', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 26, pp. 467-97.

5. Identity narratives; discussing the nation and the tribe

The following narratives by IDPs are examined as “identity narratives”: they are dialogues that present information about the way people in the camps interpret their lives, the frameworks they employ to make sense of their situation in relations to others, and how their construction of the “self” and the “other” relates to shifting relations of power within and beyond the camps. These identity narratives are also an indigenous discourse that shows how people verbally articulate social boundaries and use them to outline the systems of meaning that eventually lends significance to collective identities. Ultimately, the narratives are used to explore how the subjective significance of ethnic categories is produced.

The common narrative concerning the identity of IDPs views them to be exclusively Kikuyu speaking families and individuals living in transitional settlements and camps along the Mai Mahiu-Nakuru Highway and elsewhere in Kenya. This is a narrative that points to the visible scars of disenfranchised communities camping by the roadside hoping for the sympathy of well-wishers. Due to the fact that most of the inhabitants in such camps are Kikuyu speaking, the narrative has developed that Kikuyu speaking Kenyans suffered more than any other group from the PEV. Thus, due to their visibility, most IDP narratives erroneously focus on Kikuyu speakers. A false impression has therefore been created that other communities did not suffer from the PEV as much as the Kikuyu did.

The first two individual narratives are by Marian Akinyi Rapara and Harun Chege. Both focus on articulating the political discourses of identity in the aftermath of PEV in the Kenyan highlands.

i. Marion Akinyi Rapara; the suffering of a Luo IDP

Marion Akinyi Rapara is a 33-year-old Luo woman, widowed with one child. She hails from Homa Bay and worked in Naivasha in the horticulture industry until she was forced to flee in 2007. She now lives at the Ebenezer Life Centre, in

Nyando where she and her son have found shelter. Her story is largely representative of the narratives of groups of the internally displaced scattered in Nyanza and is representative of many of the other non-Kikuyu speaking victims of Kenyan PEV.

Rapara narrates the role of ethnicity in the violence and the identification of ethnic adversaries as targets for violence. She explains that those who participated in the violence, especially those responsible for attacking others were *chokora* (homeless street people). They targeted innocent and unsuspecting “others” who did not speak the same language as themselves: “If you did not speak their language you were gone [killed]”.

I have one child who is now in form three. I used to live in Naivasha; I was employed at Longonot Horticulture. I did not know anything until that fateful Sunday morning. As usual my friends and I were going to work but when we got to pick our transport we found there were no vehicles. We were surprised. There were no people on the road either. But we saw young boys, the “chokora” carrying Rungu [clubs and other crude weapons]. They asked us questions in their mother tongue. If you did not respond in their language you were violently attacked and beaten.

In Naivasha, the majority of her workmates were Kikuyu speaking and those targeted for violence were non-Kikuyu speakers, in particular Luos. While she talks about her feelings of desperation for being targeted due to her ethnicity, Rapara is not negative when talking about Kikuyu speakers. For instance, she mentions the courage of some of her Kikuyu speaking work colleagues in their attempts to protect her from harm:

I had friends: my workmates. They were women who sandwiched me between themselves, protecting me from danger until I returned safely to my house. They were ingenious, in order to ward off attackers looking for the Luo blood, they spoke Kikuyu with me sandwiched between them. In this way the attackers could not identify me as non-Kikuyu speaker.

According to Rapara, the situation in Naivasha deteriorated rapidly and inter-communal conflict involving Kikuyu and non-Kikuyu communities intensified and became life threatening. On Sunday 6 January at around 2 p.m. the situation exploded:

We heard screams from the place called Kabati where houses belonging to non-Kikuyu speaking communities were set on fire. We felt disturbed and were asking ourselves questions: "What should we do? Where shall we go?" There are good Kikuyu. I was saved by my Kikuyu friends. When the situation got worse I decided to seek shelter at the police station.

When asked to explain why she chose to go to the prison which was close to the police station she had the following to say:

There were many other people who sought security at the prisons compound. I chose to go there because of its security. Getting there was not easy; there were violent gangs bent on harming non-Kikuyu speaking people on the way. These had blocked the road and they were identifying non-Kikuyu speakers to harm them.

Again Rapara was saved by a Kikuyu- speaking friend:

For me to get to the prisons compound safely, I called my Kikuyu friend for help who had a motorbike. He asked where I was, and I told him I was at the bridge. He rushed there on his motorbike. He asked where my child was. I told him that he was at school. He rushed there. But he found that the gang had harmed my child. They had cut his neck. The scar is still visible. They had found him on his way home from school. My friend spoke with them in their language. He told them that this child is "our person" and asked them to stop harming him. He convinced them to stop hurting him and carried him on his motorbike to the prison. Then he called me to let me know that he had my child. Then, I had to find my way to the prison but the road was blocked for us. We wondered what to do. We called taxis operated by people who spoke that language. All non-Kikuyu people assembled together and our pastor called the police. The police

came with their vehicle and carried us to the prison compound. By then the Kikuyu speakers had armed themselves with panga and were looking for non-Kikuyu young men and boys. Whenever they found them they would chop off their necks and castrate them.

There are many reasons attributed to the causes of the PEV and the subsequent expulsion of some communities from regions that they are not considered indigenous to, but Rapara believes that:

It was all politics nothing but politics... it was after the announcement of the election results, after they announced that Kibaki had won. The following day people started fighting. The problem started because in the beginning of the vote tallying, Raila was leading Kibaki. They announced over and over on the radio that Raila was leading and Kibaki was behind. At the beginning we knew that Raila had won. Later we heard that Kibaki was leading. That's when trouble started. People began questioning how it was possible that the one who was leading has now been overtaken in the vote tallying. Relations between communities were already bad during the campaigning period. Kikuyu speaking communities in Naivasha were agitating that Kibaki must be president. They lamented that a Luo cannot lead them. I thought that elections results should be the ones to separate the winner and the loser and the winner will be our leader.

It is hard to accept being called an IDP

Some victims of PEV struggle to accept being referred to as IDPs. They can relate to their situation and realize they have been displaced, yet their moments of realization, when they have to accept what has happened to them, are hard to internalize:

I cannot accept that name now. I accepted it then because at that time, I felt pain. My child was harmed and injured. I lost all my possessions; they were all burned in my house. I wondered about the meaning of being Kenyan. I asked, "Why are they doing this to us? We are all Kenyans!" At that time I accepted

being called an IDP, because I was displaced from where I used to leave. Now I don't accept being called an IDP. Because, I don't accept that, I am not an IDP. I am at home and I have settled. Now what happened to me? I have forgotten. I have forgotten, because I am settled. I am still a Kenyan because I have not run away from Kenya, I am still in Kenya. We have not been compensated but others have.

As previously mentioned, four months after the violence, the government launched a program to resettle the victims. Through financial inducements under Operation Rudi Nyumbani evictees (especially the IDPs) were encouraged to take cash allowances that would assist them to resettle back into where they had been evicted from. However, this exercise was littered with problems. For example, some IDPs, particularly those from Western Kenya complained that they did not receive any compensation. They thought that compensation was only paid to IDPs from Central Kenya. In Nyanza, Operation Rudi Nyumbani was criticized by IDPs who had been evicted from Central Kenya. For example, when they settled with their relatives and families in Nyanza they become ineligible for financial assistance.

We asked Rapara to narrate her experience concerning resettlement funding.

We were not fully compensated. Most other people were paid all the money, but we the people of this side [meaning Nyanza], we have not been given all the money. We don't know what is going on. We were given 10,000 shillings. There was another 25,000 shillings, but this we did not get. Even to get the initial 10,000 shillings was a big hassle. We had to hold demonstrations at the DC's and DO's offices. It seems the government was only there for IDPs from Central Kenya. They were given money, yet they did not go through the same experiences because when they were leaving Nyanza they were not attacked. They were evacuated; they did not camp at market places. They did not go through what we went through. The Kikuyu speaking communities who left Nyanza were not attacked. Right now most of the IDPs in Nyanza are Luo; they were evicted from places in Central Province. I was evicted from Naivasha,

others were evicted from Eldoret but we have not been compensated. I cannot understand why Kikuyu IDPs have received compensation and we Luo have received nothing. The people of Central were paid the 25,000 shillings, but we from Nyando District have not been given the money. We are still meeting every Sunday to see whether they can give us our money or not. We need it to construct our houses.

I understand that Kikuyu speaking communities were evicted from other places too. We witnessed that and saw others staying at market places. It is when fellow Kikuyu saw that their people were being attacked in other places they also started to attack other communities. The Kikuyu speaking in Nyanza were running away because of their fear that they will be attacked but in reality an attack there never took place. They were just running away. If the Kikuyu were attacked in Nyanza it would have been announced on radio and people would have seen pictures on TV. What we went through, people were seeing with their own eyes on TV. People saw how the situation was in Eldoret, how it was in Nakuru, Nairobi, and Naivasha. But in Nyanza who attacked these people? They were no Luo seen carrying pangas to attack Kikuyu. I am not saying this because I have quarrels with a Kikuyu; it is not the Kikuyu who caused the problem. The Kikuyu was evicted in the same way that I was evicted so I cannot quarrel with them or hate them. I can only blame the politicians, the people we voted for. They are the cause of our problems.

What does Truth and Reconciliation mean to Rapara?

I have not heard about reconciliation, I have not heard about the Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission, I have not heard about Kiplagat [in reference to Bethwell Kiplagat, the Chairman of the Truth and Justice and Reconciliation Commission].

Will you be willing to forgive those who attacked you?

Despite my experience, I will still forgive my attackers. I will not have any conditions other than that the person must repent and say I am the one who did

this to you and then I will forgive them. But I am not optimistic that someone can come to me, own up and ask for forgiveness. They cannot admit to it. If they could, they would have admitted but they cannot admit. But a human being can change. Through talking, talking can make somebody change if they can talk about what they did. The Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission must strive for people to tell the truth, because when politicians did not tell the truth about the elections it brought all this chaos. The truth itself is that which is told without bias. The way they swore in the president was not truth; there were only a few people. We watched on the TV, there were only a few people, five or six. There was no truth there because there were not many people, which is the way it should be. When he was sworn in the first time there were many people. The place he was sworn in was not the right place. The right place is parliament. The swearing in this time was like a personal thing, a family ceremony; since we started to vote for president a winner has never been sworn in like that. We have never experienced such a swearing in ceremony. To swear in a president like that with a few people. For sure it was a lie. If it would have been the truth they would have announced that date and time of swearing in.

Despite having such misgivings Rapara expresses hope that healing is possible:

I have spoken to people and through talking they have changed. I spoke with the child of my brother. She was from Eldoret, she was crying because they killed her child in the chaos. She was mourning all the time, remembering her child. I told her the child was not yours and that maybe the child belonged to the world; you will get another one which is yours, so talking to somebody helps because now she is living a normal life.

On voting and the future of democratic elections, she said:

Despite what happened I have a voter's card, I have registered and I will vote. I will vote because I am a Kenyan and I must vote because the vote will separate those who are truthful and those who lie, it's the vote that chooses a leader. But

we pray that voting next time around will not result in the chaos of the last election. Chaos and clashes are a waste.

What else do you remember about Naivasha?

I just don't know what to say, because for now I don't even want to hear anything about Naivasha. It is painful to remember; all the property that I brought was destroyed and now I am empty handed. I have been dragged back completely. I don't want to remember Naivasha. They killed very many people. They killed us. When I remember those that we stayed with, our neighbors, there is one I was with where my shop was. He also had his shop. He saw his three children being murdered. At the time, we thought our youth should also join the war. We saw that these people had the backing of their politicians. We did not have the backing so they defeated us. I cannot return to Naivasha, but I have not tried to return there because they destroyed my property, they destroyed everything I had, I was left naked. My heart is not prepared to go back there.

ii. Harun Chege and the political discourse of ethnic identity

This is the narrative of Harun Chege, a 38-year-old male, a husband and a father of three children. Chege is a Kikuyu, born in Uasin Gishu, and married to a Kikuyu woman from the same district. He is a socially engaged person; the leader of the Jikaze IDP Self Help Group, who at a relatively young age decided to take on the responsibility of leading the families at Jikaze. His mother was a Kikuyu, born in Uasin Gishu but he recalls that his father originally came from Muranga but had moved to Uasin Gishu at a young age to look for employment in the large farms owned by Europeans. He found a job as a tractor driver and later on was able to buy a five acre piece of land at Loigi Farm, Burnt Forest through a land buying society. During the violence Chege and his family were evicted from this land and were now living on a smaller piece of land at the Jikaze IDP settlement along the Nakuru-Mai Mahiu Road.

Based on his experience he articulates how ethnic categorization provides an idiom for limiting access to power and control over land. His narrative represents the experiences of about 200 displaced Kikuyu families living at *Jikaze*. Through Chege, the IDPs at Jikaze are presented as challenging in the most significant way, the official discourse of the post-independence era that has claimed to have subsumed notions of ethnic group under the unified idea of a national community. Yet, for him and his community of IDPs, their experiences of the last decade have proved, in particular, that ethnic categorization and subjective definitions of collective identities continue to reconfigure in novel and unexpected ways.

Ethnic Identity

Chege identifies himself as a Kikuyu because he speaks Kikuyu and both his parents were Kikuyu. However, he has never lived in any of the regions that are identified as the ancestral homes of the Kikuyu, for example Murang'a, Kiambu or Nyeri. He recalls his father telling him that he was from Murang'a but moved to live in the Rift Valley in his youth. Due to his father's connection to Murang'a, he did not have a problem being asked about his ethnic identity. In fact he was "not ashamed of ethnicity". Belonging to an ethnic group appears to give him, like it does to many other Kenyans, a sense of belonging and a feeling of being wanted and honored while in that group.

Chege is proud of his Kikuyu ethnic identity, but was particularly cautious and avoided naming other ethnic groups as he narrated his experience. He discusses his eviction from Burnt Forest with a sense of sorrow and talks about the loss of "good times". He is particularly thoughtful of the "betrayal" by his neighbors, his childhood school mates and friends. He attempts to forget the past by consciously avoiding any mention of the ethnic identity of those who betrayed him:

These people that we quarreled with, we lived with them in peace. I was born there [in the Rift Valley] and I have schooled with them since my childhood. We were friends, we visited each other, ate together, drunk together. But during the election campaign period, those people turned and became enemies... I found out that these people were definitely politically incited.

The narrative suggests that Chege has in mind specific people, yet he avoids naming them other than referring to them as “these people”. This ambiguity is persistent throughout his narrative:

That conflict was worse, it appears “they” had arranged well. It was a big problem... these people followed us! Even in schools where we were camping.

An altered Identity: from National ID to Red-Cross ID

Before moving to Jikaze, Chege lived for a while in a Red Cross IDP camp in Naivasha. It was not his plan to stay long-term in the camp. Moreover, at the start he was just moving away from the danger of PEV in Uasin Gishu:

From there on, life was hard. People were gathered at the police station; they were congested like ants, when you left you could not carry anything, only the clothes that were on the body. No food, no money, the little money that was left in your house was burned, food was burned, clothes were burned, you were left without anything. What happens when you see a lorry and you know the clashes are still going on and that people wanted to burn everything? You beg to have you and your children helped. We boarded the lorry not even knowing where we were going.

This is how he narrates his departure from his home and birthplace to the camp at Naivasha. Unfortunately he feels that these memories are unforgettable.

Chege had his Kenyan identity card, but laments that it failed to provide him with security for his family, a job or the right to own property. Furthermore, he narrates how the government failed to provide him with the legitimacy of being an identifiable IDP and that this was something that the Red Cross had to provide him. Despite being annoyed by the lack of government action, he found some of the aforementioned rights being provided for in Naivasha where the Red Cross had registered families who needed assistance and issued them with IDP identity cards and numbers. At that moment he cherished his IDP identity card and number more than he did his Kenyan national identity card. Furthermore, he

feels that the identity given to him by the Red Cross as an IDP has become part of his history and thus part of him, an identity that cannot be erased:

This Red Cross Card was everything to me. It was identifying me as an IDP, with this card I was safe, and they could defend me. It also identifies my house and you see that they have written my wife and children's names and K2, my tent number. It was my most important card, my Red Cross IDP identity.

The Red Cross Identity card and number have clearly altered aspects of Chege's identity. Yet, it also changes his identity in another way. While he sees the identity card as his, it actually belongs to his wife, Ester Wangare. As IDPs in the Red Cross camps at Naivasha, it was not Chege who was provider to the family, or who was the breadwinner. Conversely, the Red Cross had altered that role from men to women and to the mothers of the children. He narrates with clarity on the reasons why gender roles were reversed:

The Red Cross mostly preferred women, because they knew that women were more responsible to the family. If given provisions, women will not deny their children but men would. Some men have taken the provisions from the Red Cross and sold it to buy local brew, but women cannot do that. Women would not squander their family's food. They told us that in a seminar.

Although he explains that being an IDP has become a huge part of his own history and life, by having an IDP identity number and card, Chege believes that he is part of a much bigger picture. Namely, the history of Kenya that will be told by generations for years to come:

You know, this is history, it will never be hidden, and we can only try to unite with our enemies. To say that we hide this history so that my children don't come to know about it, this will never happen.

6. Continued displacement: Ideas from a focused group discussion

These narratives were collected during a focus group discussion (FGD) held at the Jikaze IDP camp in Mai Mahiu along the Nairobi-Nakuru Road. The FGD was comprised of three women: Jane Karura Wanyoike, Ann Wanjiru Mwangi and Rose Nyambura and two men: John Ngotho and Samuel Irungu. All are aged over 50.

Emerging from the narratives of the displaced of Jikaze, the displacement crisis following the 2007 elections was not an anomaly; rather, it was part of a sequence of recurrent displacement stemming from unresolved and politically aggravated land grievances, poor governance and socio-economic insecurity. For many IDPs at Jikaze, the displacement of 2008 was a continued and recurrent problem that started before the General election of 1992. This is a narrative shared by the majority of Kikuyu IDPs who have been evicted from the Rift Valley. This view was captured in the above mentioned focused group discussion. The following are their recollections:

i. Ann Wanjiru Mwangi; narrating perseverance (*kujikaza*)

My name is Ann Wanjiru Mwangi; although I was the last to arrive here, let me begin. Yes, I am an IDP from Eldoret. I was born in Kaptagat; I grew up there and married from there. I am now 63-years-old. My experience began in 1992, the first clashes when we Kikuyus were attacked. During that attack I ran to seek refuge in Ol-Kalau. There were many of us. My life was hard because of the children. My husband ran away. I did not know where he went. Life was unbearable. I did casual work in order to pay for my rent, food, and school fees for my children. Because of the difficulties I left Ol-Kalau and went back to Eldoret. I stayed in Eldoret at a place called Langas. This place was badly affected by the clashes of December 2007 and my house was burned to the ground. We were chased away by people carrying spears, arrows, pangas and rungas. From Langas, we ran for safety to Eldoret police

station. We stayed there. People were getting ill, it was congested. We could not stay anymore and went to seek refuge at the church. We stayed at the cathedral in Eldoret. We were sleeping outside; there were no tents, no anything. Yet, we persevered. The “owner” of the church, he was called Korir. He is a Bishop; he looked for ways to get us transport to leave the church compound. He hired Lorries for us from the company “Raiply” which transported us to the Nakuru showground. We stayed there for one year. Life at the showground was terrible and lots of people were getting sick. There were constant rumors that we would be attacked again. But we got help from the Red Cross. They assisted us. Even when we moved to this camp they came to assist us.

Maybe life can begin afresh; hoping against hope

When we came here some elders sat and discussed how we could help ourselves. Before we left the showground we were each given 10,000 shillings by the government. There were around 235 adults among us and from that money we each donated 2,000 shillings. We used that money to buy 2.5 acres here. When we arrived here the government also gave us an additional grant of 25,000 shillings to assist us in resettling. The elders told us not to spend that money and that we should look for more land because the parcel we bought was small and we were congested. After the struggle to acquire this land, we now have to endure the problem of starting life afresh. Maybe it is possible to do that here. But these tents in which we live in are leaking. This place can be cold and our children are constantly falling sick. Now we are asking for help to provide shelter to our children. We need building material like iron sheets. Perhaps Habitat can be asked to help us build good shelters. These tents are always leaking. What we need is help to start life afresh. That is my story.

ii. Jane Wanyoike; God and Bishop Korir was there for us

I am called Jane Wanyoike. I was born in Kiambu and migrated to Eldoret town. I have stayed in Eldoret for over 30 years. I have five children. All my children were born in Eldoret. I did not experience any problems during the clashes of 1992

because urban centers were not affected. I was badly affected by the clashes of December 2007. I have vivid recollections; we faced problems, many problems.

In December 2007 I was living in Kipkaren estate. I remember very well how the clashes began. They began when Mwai Kibaki was announced the winner of the elections. That night we slept out together with my last born child. It was difficult. Our neighbors were telling us to leave and go back to our homes in Othaya. We left everything in the house. We moved to Eldoret at the Cathedral. It is called St. John. We stayed at the Cathedral for two weeks. We went through a lot of problems. We were sleeping outside without any blankets, without clothing. Finding food was even a problem. At the Cathedral we were told to leave because the place had become too congested. But Bishop Korir did a lot for us. He organized for us to be transported and moved to the Eldoret showground. Unfortunately, while there we encountered more problems. We moved during the rainy season and the tents we were provided with were leaking. We had problems but our God was on our side. God was there for us and so was Bishop Korir.

We founded a society-Jikaze (perseverance)

After staying at the showground our elders, our chairman and others told us to form a society so that we could know how to survive. We thought the clashes should not be the end for us, we wanted to assist ourselves. When we were told to register, we readily accepted. We registered knowing that there was no other way. The government granted us 10,000 shillings each. We collected it and bought a small piece of property. When we got an additional grant of 25,000 we bought an additional piece of land, this plot where we are living. We are experiencing a lot of problems, we used to be self-reliant, but life has changed for us, we are now beggars, we cannot find work. Some of us do not want to remember what we went through. Our children lack schools, they cannot learn, they cannot find jobs. But I thank God because God is faithful, he has brought us here. I want to ask the government to be mindful of us, we are Kenyans too. We have been chased away in our own country, yet we do not see a caring government. We have been promised a lot, they have told us a lot, but nothing has been accomplished. I plea and request

the government to care about us. The government should know we are Kenyans. It is our right to live like other Kenyans. We came from far. We had our own lives, our own jobs. Suddenly, like a flash we saw our fortunes perish, we were turned to paupers. But we pray to God because he is faithful and he will continue to grace us. What I want is for a sponsor, a benefactor who can help us. We have very young children, who get sick of pneumonia. We ask to be assisted to recover from this shock. That's all.

iii. Rose Nyambura Mwangi; boys in skirts

My name is Rose Nyambura Mwangi. I have seven children, six boys and two girls. I was born in Kiambu. I came to Eldoret in 1964 and I grew up and married there. All my children were born there and it is my home. My parents died in Eldoret. We buried them in Eldoret. I have been affected by the clashes three times now. First I was living in Olunguruene in 1992. We were evicted from there and went to live in Eldoret town. I settled at Maili Nne. The second time in 1997 we were also attacked in rural and interior parts of Eldoret. We faced a lot of problems and real dangers. Maili Nne was in the interior and we were completely cut off. We were in great danger. We managed to get to the road and camped at the main Nakuru-Eldoret Road at the Weighbridge. The roads were blocked and we could not go to Eldoret town. The third time, clashes happened after Kibaki was declared winner of the elections. People started to burn houses. Kikuyu youth were targeted to be murdered. We were told that was what Kibaki meant when he said "Kazi Iendelee" [let work continue]. The police did not help us. We were surrounded.

Kalenjin youth came pouring petrol on our houses and set them on fire. They were calling for Kikuyu young males and challenged them to come out of the houses to face them. All Kikuyu young males who were then caught were murdered. I gave my skirts to my boys and asked them to disguise themselves. I tied veils on my boys as we escaped. My children and I were separated. We feared being found together. We thought we would all be killed if we continued to stay together. We decided to be separated just in case we are caught and killed. For five days I did not know where my children were. But we had all agreed to go towards Nakuru. I stayed for

five days without seeing my sons. Luckily we found each other. We then camped at the police station at Eldoret. We stayed there for two weeks. It was congested; there were no toilets, no places to sleep. We moved to the Cathedral and stayed for two weeks. Then Bishop Korir took us to showground. We stayed there. That's when we started planning our future life. We got organized under our leaders. Just like my colleagues have said we used the 10,000 and 25,000 shillings grants from the government to buy this small piece of land where we have settled. You see I am an old woman: I am now 59 years old going on 60. I have lost everything I owned. Whenever I have tried to rise up I am brought down. Now my years are gone. I can only foresee problems. People here are idle, they have no jobs, and they have no money. We were all evicted; we lost our property, now nobody can assist the other. I am a single mother; I cannot live in this tent with all my grown-up children. These tents cause families a lot of stress. Families of husband, mother, girls and boys are all living in one tent. It's stressful. These tents are leaking. We hope that we can be supported to construct our own houses. If we get assistance with constructing our own houses we will have moved a step ahead. We need to be assisted with jobs for our men and youth. We want to see our life being reconstructed again. We feel we are suffering and yet we are in our country. Our children are suffering, our youths have no education, the girls are suffering, and they have lost hope. We used to take care of them, we were self-sufficient, we had jobs, we cultivated our land and everybody was working for their families. Look now, since this happened, I cannot assist my daughters, if a woman needs something from the husband, the husband cannot provide. That is what I wanted to say.

iv. John Ngotho

My name is John Ngotho, I am 52-years-old. I am a parent; I have five children: three daughters and two sons. I came from Kapsabet. That is where the clashes got me, in Kapsabet in Nandi North. I have lived in Kapsabet my whole life. My parents moved there during independence, after the colonial period. They bought land in Kapsabet. I was living on my family land. I was fine there. I used to get some income from the land. My children went to school. I was not depending on anybody. All this was

changed after the clashes. My neighbor had finished building his new house. It was worthy over one million. He said he could not run away from the clashes and leave his new house. But when Kibaki was announced the winner of the elections every house belonging to a Kikuyu was burned down. We started evacuating our children. They are mature children. They could not believe that we are made to leave our homes. They did not understand the chaos. They thought it was little misunderstandings. The clashes persisted so we went to seek security from the police. But there was nothing they could do. They were just exploding tear gas and nothing else. At the police station the indigenous people of the place, the Nandi, demanded that we be expelled from the police station. They threatened to attack the police station and kill us.

At the police station there were so many people and we were congested. We thought it was equally dangerous to stay at the police compound because of the threats and rumors of being attacked. We thought it was better to leave. At that time the government sent Lorries to evacuate people. We boarded with our children not knowing where we were going. We had not planned to go anywhere. We boarded the Lorries because it was safe but did not know where we were going. But the Lorries headed towards Central Province. My children went to Nakuru and I went to Eldoret. We stayed there for some time until when the Red Cross united us. In Eldoret we faced many problems. It was congested, food was scarce and life was hard. The children could not attend school. We got lucky when the government gave us a grant of 10,000 shillings. We organized ourselves and bought this land. We are 235 heads of families who contributed to buy this land.

The government did not like the idea of people living at the show ground. It was an eyesore; we were an eyesore to the government. The money they gave us was not enough to settle anywhere but of course we accepted it. We took the money but could not go back to where we were evicted from. We could not go back to our homes. We were concerned about our security. We came from different places and there was no guarantee that every person who went back would be safe. We came here because it is safe, nobody will evict us anymore, we feel this is ours and we are safe. We liked this place because of the security. Sometimes generous people came to visit us because they have never seen IDPs in their country. People flocked here;

they bring us some food, clothing and anything they can spare. We got help from the ministry of special programs in the form of an additional 25,000 shillings. We contributed again and bought a larger piece of land and sub-divided it into smaller plots for everybody.

v. Samuel Irungu: our tents, our jails; narrating broken expectations

My name is Samuel Irungu I was born in Uasin Gishu, Soy Division Kamagut sub-location. When the post-election violence began I was in Uasin Gishu. I did not expect to be affected by the violence. The Kalenjin people are my in-laws. I grew up amongst the Kalenjin, our children schooled together, we have stayed together. I never expected this violence to happen. It has caused big problems for the future. It has affected our children. The children are our hope but now they cannot trust each other. You see the people who are called IDPs are facing problems because the government does not think about them. Some of the IDPs are children. We have children here who cannot go to school, some have completed lower levels schools and have sat for the examinations but they cannot progress further. We have been baptized the name of IDP yet we are Kenyans. You see they are asking us to register in order to be able to vote during the referendum, yet they don't address why we are living in tents. These tents which we are living in are not habitable. When it rains they leak. The government must help us construct our own houses and remove us from this jail; these tents are like living in jail. Living in this condition makes me feel less of a Kenyan. That is what I wanted to say. I think I will stop there.

7. PEV and being Kenyan

Respondent (woman): *So I thought I was a typical Kenyan but I found out that I am not a Kenyan because when I voted to elect a leader for my country it was said I was an ethnic Kikuyu who is not part of the other Kenyan tribes; I was called a Kikuyu who was disliked by the other 41 ethnic groups. I still ask myself where the Kikuyu came from. I am not so sure of what it means to be Kenyan anymore. I have registered as a voter, yet I don't know what it means to be Kenyan, is it based on the particular place you were born? I would like to know how this post-election violence occurred. If I was a true Kenyan the government would have committed to help me but they have not. Like many other IDPs I also ask what type of Kenyan I am.*

Respondent (Woman): *I am a Kenyan. I see myself as being Kenyan because I was born and brought up in Kenya. Yet, despite how I see myself, other communities do not identify me as a Kenyan.*

Respondent (Woman): *I will add to what this woman has said. All of us have been evicted; we are all together here because of that eviction from the post-election violence. Before coming here we did not know each other. I took my belongings and went to the place I would get security. That is why I keep wondering why I am running away when I am still in Kenya. Yes we are Kenyans, we were born in Kenya. Even if I run away to Uganda I will not be a Ugandan citizen, I will still remain a Kenyan citizen. The government must protect the rights of every Kenyan. If I wish to visit Western Kenya I should go without fear, if I wish to go back to Eldoret I should be able to go and stay there knowing that I am safe. I am Kenyan, born in Kenya and will live anywhere in Kenya. We were evicted by our neighbors, they were the ones telling us to leave. We did not just pick our belongings and leave. No, we were threatened. I was told to migrate to Othaya as though it is a different country. I was internally evicted within my own country. I did not want to leave; I was forced to leave.*

Respondent (Woman): *My side of the story is that I went to Eldoret in 1964, I was brought up in Eldoret, and my parents are buried there. It did not occur to me that one day I would leave Eldoret. We were brought up together with the Kalenjin and we have stayed together, so I was surprised to see the neighbor whom you have been so close to is the one who comes to burn your house. I kept wondering “who is a Kenyan? Where am I supposed to live?” It was my parents who left Central Kenya and came to Uasin Gishu, in the Rift Valley. I do not know any other place apart from there. I was shocked to see that those we stayed with for many years, those I went to school with and those who our children played with were the ones marking our houses to be burned.*

Respondent (Male): *My story is short; I want to say we were evicted because we are Kikuyu and we were evicted by the Nandi. It is as short as that.*

Respondent (Male): *My story too is the same. We were evicted, we were many. One community was being evicted. Why were we evicted? Because we voted for the candidate we liked. That was the beginning of everything. Nobody cares about us. I am a refugee in my own country. Nobody cares about me. Even refugees from other countries like those from Sudan are well cared for. But me, a Kenyan who is a refugee in my own country, nobody cares for. I get no services from my own government, but the Sudanese on the other hand do. The same government that I voted for has turned me into a refugee and has forgotten about me. I came from Eldoret North. That is where Ruto comes from. It is Ruto who is responsible for my condition. Yet, he was rewarded, he was appointed to a ministerial post while I am still in a tent. This government is a farce. I shall stop there.*

Respondent (Male): *Yes, the Nandi and Kalenjin are my in-laws. We have inter-married. But they did not tell me that they had a secret plan to evict us. They did not tell me to run away to save myself and my belongings. They just keep quiet. You see they were the ones who began destroying my property.*

Respondent (Male): *When they destroyed my property they did not consider whether you had inter-married with them. Since you were Kikuyu you were not one of them. I married their sister: a Kalenjin. They took her, evicted me and left me with nothing. Many people who married Kalenjin women had them taken away by their relatives. That is why in this camp you get many young men without wives and many women don't have their husbands. People who had inter-married had their families ended. A man who had married a Nandi lady had to leave her. That is why you see many bachelors in this camp, yet they have children. Women here are widows with their children. These children were not gotten from outside. They got them with their husbands. These husbands have remained there. The Nandi were forced to divorce their Kikuyu women. Of course they did not wish to do so but their people forced them to.*

Respondent (Woman): *Some young men were married to Kalenjin and Nandi wives but their wives left them and went to their parents. There were also Kalenjin and Nandi girls who were married to Kikuyu men but they were taken back by their parents or brothers. We are now left with a very big burden. There are grandmothers taking care of their grandchildren because their parents were murdered or separated during the violence. We are feeling a lot of pain. We did not steal land from the Nandi, we bought it from them. Yet they keep on coming back to demand the land back after they have spent the money.*

Respondent (male): *What I know is that the Kalenjin people had taken an oath that no Kikuyu will remain in the Rift Valley. So it did not matter whether you were a man, woman or child, you had to leave the Rift Valley. There was no possibility of remaining. Those with Nandi children from intermarriages often came later: they were evicted even after the post-election violence.*

Respondent (Woman): *To return to the Rift Valley would be a big problem. We lived in the interior, in the middle of them [the Kalenjin]; there were many of us from different communities. We bought the land because they accepted to sell. But we saw bad things happening and we cannot think of going back. It is not safe. We*

saw our children and husbands being murdered. How could we accept to go back? To return would be too painful.

Respondent (Woman): *I also think it is hard to think of returning. Those people just want to see you dead so that they can take your property. So it is very hard to think of going back to live amongst them. You cannot accept to do that. Your life is more important than anything else: you can lose your property and that is terrible but once you have lost your life that is the end. If we had been killed we would not be here speaking with you now. I cannot say I want to go back there.*

8. IDPs as the neglected

IDPs narrated that immediate relief requirements were met at the camps in Naivasha through the combined efforts of the IDPs themselves, the government, civil society organizations, aid agencies and international donors. However, since moving to camps such as Vumilia and Jikaze, life has been unbearable because there is little support coming from the government. Security is also a major concern. Samuel Irungu explains that:

If you go to the schools where our children learn, they are overcrowded with one class having around 150 pupils. That is like a church, not a school. That is the first problem that we have. Secondly, we have children who were in secondary schools but could not finish their studies on time because of the evictions. We also find raising school fees for them a problem and have to depend on well-wishers or the Constituency Development Funds (CDF) for the money. The children are in school today, tomorrow they stay at home. Because of that they get poor results. This is a very big problem because the children are our hope and they will also have to assist themselves later in life. So you see the people who are called IDPs have problems because the government does not think about them. We have children here who have completed school and have done well in their examinations, yet they have nothing now to do. We have not seen the government officials come here to ask about these children who did exams, they don't ask about how they can be assisted to continue with their studies. We have been baptized with the name of IDP and yet we are told that we are Kenyans.

Now they want us to register as voters and yet we are still living in tents.⁹ These tents let the rain in and they need repairing. We request this government, to help us, to construct houses for us and remove us from this jail. We are living

⁹ The interviews were carried out at a time when the government was registering voters for the referendum on the new constitution.

like this and yet they are saying that we are Kenyans so we feel the government should just do one thing: give us houses. I think I will stop there.

As Harun Chege narrated:

I was born in that place, lived there all my life and was married there. However, I was forced to move because of the ethnic clashes. It was the not the first time that ethnic violence erupted in Burnt Forest. This was the third time and I had no choice but to leave. During the first clashes in 1992 we assembled in a school, we were assisted by the police until the situation calmed down and then we returned to our homes and resumed normal life. But the clashes of 2007 were of higher intensity: they burned our property and told us that this was not our home. When we tried to assemble at the police station the clashes intensified and we had to leave our homes completely behind.

Rose Nyambura Mwangi also noted:

I have been affected by the clashes on three occasions. I used to reside in Olenguroene where in 1992 I experienced my first displacement because of ethnic clashes. We left Olenguruene with nothing and went to live in Eldoret. The second time I was affected by clashes I used to live in Maili Nne in Eldoret.

i. On reconciliation

IDPs narrate legitimate concerns and question the government's efforts at reconciliation. They argue that those calling for reconciliation between the displaced and former neighbors have no idea of the suffering that many people have gone through. They said that they would not wish to hear from self-appointed agents of reconciliation; that no-one should be talking for the perpetrators. Many people believed that reconciliation could only be achieved when the planners of the violence had apologized in person. Others on the other hand, felt that an apology from the people who had not necessarily planned the

attacks but had committed them would have been sufficient for reconciliation to occur. Sadly, many were well aware of the small chance of these apologies ever happening. Harun Chege had the following views on reconciliation:

I feel that peace can be achieved through me and the people I lived with. Secondly, it can be achieved through the government. I could take revenge but the government has the power to intervene and know what is going on and to stop it first. We can try not to remember what happened but it is impossible to forgive those who burned down our houses. How can you reconcile with those people? The people who did this were brought from different places to do so. If you don't know these people, who do you forgive? The person who planned it is the one who we can sit with and discuss what happened. If he says "I was the one who hired these people, please forgive me", that is the kind of person we can forgive. How do I forgive the youths who were hired to burn down our house and who simply went away again?

Celline Atieno who lives in Kisumu but was displaced from Naivasha stated that:

From my experience it is not possible at this time to reconcile. Okay you can try to forgive but forgetting is a problem, that is to say reconciliation is hard for me. If one wants to forgive, it is okay. It is okay; you can forgive. But you know I will not forget because if something small happens, it triggers the past: like you are going to do to me again what you did in the past. Let us take the example of the recent voter registration. I refused to take a voters card, I said "No, I am not taking one!" My husband said "Why are you not taking one?" I said that the voter's card reminded me of the bad things of the past. I told him "Do you want to remind me of what happened before?" In the past, I had traveled all the way from Nairobi to Naivasha and I paid my own fare to go and vote for the person I liked and this is the outcome. So I don't want to register as a voter. Let me stay; just let me stay in my house.

In fact when the registration officer asked me to register, I declined his offer. Then he left because he did not want to argue with me. He came back at

Ebenezer asking people to register for the referendum and I asked them not to talk to me again about voting, I insisted that "I don't want to hear anything about voting", I told them to go away, because I didn't want to hear anything about votes.

Atieno also talked about the difficulties she faces when she thinks about reconciliation:

I find it very hard to reconcile with the people who burned down my house. I don't know how to start the process and my heart cannot take it. How do I sit down with this man and listen to him say sorry, to talk about how it happened and what made him kill innocent people? Reconciliation might take place in the future, but it will take a long time. I don't think it will be easy. I have not reached the stage where I was earlier [financially stable and secure]. Maybe when I reach this level again, then I will try and forget. That is my normal life and a stage where I can forgive from.

The above narratives express the bitterness that is felt by IDPs and show how such feelings make it difficult for them to contemplate reconciliation with their tormentors. It is clear that some are not sure anymore of the point of voting. After all, they feel that they were evicted because they chose to exercise their democratic right by voting for a candidate of their choice. Furthermore, many feel that the politicians whom they voted for have abandoned them. As one IDP mentioned: "For two years since the post-election violence the President which we elected has not addressed the plight of IDPs at Vumilia and Jikaze". The IDPs argue that all these issues undermine any effort at reconciliation and make them feel not at home in their own country. They repeatedly raised the question: who do we reconcile with? Rose Nyambura Mwangi added:

Surely Kenyan IDP's are still Kenyan but without many of their previous rights. For instance, I presume that they are still Kenyan but don't feel like they are Kenyans. I thought that I was a typical Kenyan. But as I found out I am not treated as Kenyan because when I voted in my country's election I became a

Kikuyu: not part of Kenya and unwanted by the other 41 ethnic groups. If I was a true Kenyan the government would have committed to help me so that I would feel like a true Kenyan. So many IDPs ask this question: "What type of Kenyans are they?" The government should shed some light on this matter. Yes we are Kenyans. I was born in Kenya and even if I am told to go to Uganda which I know because my children have schooled there, I am still Kenyan. We want the government, if possible, to put in place a system which identifies us as Kenyan.

Samuel Njuguna noted that:

A complete Kenyan can stay and has a right to do everything so long as he is not affecting other people that he is with. I say that because look at me; I have been affected. I can give this reason because if you would have gone there during the period of the fight, you are affected education wise; I see that people are told that they have rights. But when you follow up, you see that the rights that are there are not complete. There are some that you struggle for yourself.

Two other IDPs also wanted to comment on reconciliation but wished to remain anonymous:

Respondent (woman): *We could forgive them. You can't keep something in your heart because if you do you will continue to suffer. Forgiving each other is very important, but it is also very hard. We are asked to forgive people that have not asked to be forgiven. We have not seen them physically. It is those who have suffered, those who are now bitter who can forgive, but they must forgive those who are ready to own up their wrongs. The people who did not suffer cannot convince those who have suffered to forgive. A person must come and ask for forgiveness, that person has not come yet, so who do you forgive? We have only seen people talk on behalf of the Kikuyu asking people to forgive each other. Others speak on behalf of the Kalenjin asking to be forgiven. These people did not go through the suffering and did not cause the suffering themselves. Those who caused the suffering and those who suffered are the ones to forgive and ask for forgiveness. We have seen*

Kikuyu leaders talking on behalf of the Kikuyu. A Nandi comes and talks on behalf of the Nandi, yet those who talk were not affected. They only talk in Nairobi. Then they come here after they have agreed. But these people who have agreed did not suffer. They are not the victims and they are not the perpetrators. They cannot claim to defend me. I have a mouth, I can speak for myself, and it is me who had the problems: my property was destroyed, my children suffered. Someone else cannot claim to speak on my behalf saying the Kikuyu must forgive. The Nandi in Nairobi cannot come and speak on behalf of those in the Rift Valley and say they want to be forgiven. That is impossible because he was not there. They did not see what was happening. It is hard because I saw my house burning, I saw people killed, and I saw girls raped. If that person who did all this cannot ask for forgiveness then I should not forgive. Who do I forgive? Agreeing to forgive is very hard.

Respondent (male): *Maybe we should not remember, but we cannot forgive. The people killed us and burned our house were gathered from different parts of the country so who do you forgive? How do you forgive those that you do not know? I cannot understand who I must forgive. The people who attacked us were paid; they were doing a job. Is that person going to ask for forgiveness after being paid?*

ii. The Right of Return

While the government gave money to many IDPs to give them some degree of security in a new environment, it was hoped that Operation Rudi Nyumbani would also encourage IDPs to return to their former homes. Those willing to return were provided with transport and a resettlement allowance of 35,000 shillings. Furthermore, the government promised safety for those returning.

However, despite these pledges, return has so far been limited to isolated cases. Those at Vumilia and Jikaze are a good example of those who chose to resettle elsewhere other than returning to their farms. On exercising the right of return Samuel Njuguna had the following to say:

I would like to go back and meet my friends, but not to live there. One can return but they have to be careful so that they don't get harmed. If they got out alive the first time, the second time they might not be that lucky, the situation can get worse. But as a young person I did not have difficulties with other young people. In fact I miss my friends; we did not fight each other. Perhaps our parents, the older generation hated each other? But the youth in my area did not hate each other, we are still friends you know, it is my parents. They decided that they will not go back there. They keep on saying that they will never go back. They just say they can go for a visit, but they cannot go to live or work there. No. No. You know if my parents were affected, you never know if they will do the same to you. No, I can't go and live in Rift Valley. Maybe if we live with them somewhere else, but not in Rift Valley. Maybe somewhere like Nairobi, we can stay together because in Nairobi if somebody says "Go back to your place in Central" you can easily go there. But if you start running from Eldoret you will collapse on the way before reaching Nyeri, Kiambu or Murang'a in Central Province. You know, they said the Kikuyu should go back to Central Province because Rift Valley is for the Kalenjin. I was born in the Rift Valley but if people say I should go to Central Province because the Rift Valley is not our home, then I should return home to the Central Province.

Displaced people have been reluctant to return, particularly in areas affected by land disputes. From the narratives, there are mixed feeling among IDPs on the issue of return. Some call for preconditions such as assurances on security, systems of compensation, the restoration of their lost property and measures to ensure that land issues are resolved. Many IDPs are skeptical that such conditions will be met, and are asking to be resettled in alternative sites, including in main urban areas such as Nairobi. Rose Wanjiku narrates:

What made us leave Naivasha and come to Jikaze? Originally this place was not called Jikaze but Mai Mahiu. We gave it the name Jikaze because that is the name of our group. We were told that we had to leave the government camps and with the help of 10,000 Kenyan Shillings go back to where we came from. Many thought like me, "Where I come from is all burned down". I have children

and even the school is burned down. You can see that there is still a problem! So, we decided that we are not leaving Naivasha. We thought about the 10,000 shillings. First, we refused to take it. We had a DO called Florence who went to every tent threatening that she was going to tear each one down. So we decided to form a self-help group. We registered it with the social services and called it "Jikaze". Registration was only 50 shillings per member, so we registered it as "Jikaze self-help group".

The IDPs are also worried about returning because the government has failed to conclusively address the issues that forced them to leave. They feel that their former neighbors have refused to let them return.

The displaced persons of Vumilia and Jikaze camps expressed the opinion that simply focusing on facilitating the return of the displaced in the absence of efforts to address the underlying causes risks creating the conditions for further rounds of violence and fresh displacement. Generally, the displaced fear returning to their homes until the government has addressed the issue of security, both in terms of physical security and in its wider socio-economic and legal perspectives.

Harun Chege had this to say concerning returning:

The farm I was living in was not mine, it was my father's. He had a very big family and I had been given a small portion for building and growing a little food for my children. Our farm is on the border with these people [the Kalenjin] and this is the third time that they have burned down our property. I feel that I can't go back because now there is no space for us. If the government gives me land there because it's something that they have discussed, then I will go back. But the overall need for me is security. The most important thing for everyone is security.

Celline Atieno explained why she can't go back to Naivasha:

No! No! I am not even willing to go there at all. I have a plot in Naivasha which I was developing. It was nearly finished. They destroyed my house which I was

staying in, but by good luck the houses I was building were not burned down because I had a good Kikuyu neighbor who saved it from being destroyed. My neighbor saw the way that I had been struggling to build this house- it's a plot with seventeen houses and three big shops. When people came to burn down my property my neighbor approached them and told them that it was not a Luo house. She said, "This is my house" but the people told her that they had been told that it was a Luo house and that the owner stays in Nairobi and had worked in Delamere. The women lied to them and explained that she had sold the house to me but that if you burn this house then you are burning down my property. Because of her protestations they did not burn down my house. I had given up on Naivasha completely and thought that everything on my plot had been burned down. But one day the woman went to where I was working in Delamere farm and found my husband's phone number. She called him and explained that my property was had been saved. When he said this to me I did not believe him at first and told him that everything was gone. I didn't want to hear anything about Naivasha because I found it too stressful to deal with, so we didn't talk about it afterwards. However, without telling me, my husband went to Naivasha to look at my property and to talk to the woman who had saved it. Seeing that the house was completely intact he told me that he had been there and asked me whether we could go back there to live. But I cannot go back to Naivasha, I cannot go back.

Atieno continued to narrate:

I have escaped five deaths. Five deaths! And those people are still there, they are not dead and I think that they are happy with what happened because now I am out of their sight. Going back there would be going back to a death trap. I also have young children who are in primary school to care for. That is why I cannot go back there. I better stay away from the area looking for jobs; God will reward me one day. This is not the way I was. I am just like this because of the displacement. My kids are the way they are because of the violence, this is not the way they were and staying here has affected them so much. They should be in Naivasha where they were born. They were used to the weather there but

since I came here, I have had to take them to hospital every week. The boy in class seven has got chest problems and he is not breathing well. He goes to school for one week, the next one he is sick again. So all these things have made me go back to square one.

9. IDPs of Nyanza: returnees or displaced?

The displaced persons we talked to in Ahero, Nyanza narrated their agonizing journey which they were forced to do to escape the attacks of the Kalenjin from the Elburgon, Eldoret and Kericho areas. Even though they had voted alongside them, they were nevertheless identified as those to be evicted. Even after arriving at Ebenezer Children's Home in Ahero and the African Inland Church compounds, which became IDP camps, the Kenya government never recognized them as displaced persons. Instead, the government continued identifying them as "returnees" meaning they were returning to their "ancestral homes" and were not, according to Winnie Owiti, the Director of Ebenezer Children's Home, called IDPs. This identification determined the manner in which the government dealt with the plight of the displaced in Nyanza. While other displaced persons have been offered the aforementioned 35,000 shillings to return to their homes, those in Nyanza only received 25,000 in total.

Many of the displaced at Ahero were of the opinion that the government had minimized the magnitude of the huge problem that they faced. IDPs at Ahero also said that the government wanted to show that the Kikuyu were the vast majority, if not the only group to be displaced. It is probable that the government was trying to reduce the burden of taking care of all the displaced. On the subject Marion Akinyi Rapara had this to say:

I don't know what to say because most of those people were paid all of the money that they were expected to be given, but we the people of Nyanza, we have not been given the full amount. We don't know what is going on. We were given 10,000 but have not been paid the rest. We have been to the DC and DO offices but nothing has come out of it. Yet IDPs from other tribes who reside in Nyanza have been given everything. These people have been paid yet they did not experience similar difficulties like us. In Nyanza they were not attacked in the same way we were attacked in Naivasha. When leaving Nyanza they were not attacked. They were evacuated; in fact, they had camped at market centers. They did not go through what we went through.

Most IDPs also expressed a sense of loss when they talked about relocation to “ancestral homes”; the majority disliking the idea of such a concept. Those of this opinion expressed the view that home was where they had been living, where they grew up and where they were working. For instance, the IDPs who were living in Vumilia and Jikaze were of Kikuyu ethnic identity and had lived in the Rift Valley all their lives and had little ties with their so-called ancestral homes. Samuel Njuguna had this to say on the issue:

It is difficult now to think of Central Province as my home, I was born in the Rift Valley, I have lived there all my life, Rift Valley is my ancestral home and not anywhere in Central Province.

The idea of relocating IDPs to so-called “ancestral homelands” was also of particular frustration to most elderly IDPs. Furthermore, they believed that resettlement to these areas would only offer temporary refuge for communities that have retained strong ties with their extended families.

Resettlement in areas of ethnic kinship also sets a dangerous precedent as it implicitly supports the goals of those engaged in violence and displacement as a means of “ethnically cleansing” certain regions. It also fails to take into account that the concept of “ancestral homelands” is often an artificial construction of the colonial state, rather than a reflection of historical rootedness. Ethnicity is not a static, homogenous entity, but rather a fluid concept subject to generations of intermarriage. The IDPs expressed the fear that any efforts to return to presumed “homelands” undermines the notion of a Kenyan “nation” and goes against the constitutional provision that any Kenyan can live anywhere in the country. Furthermore, the fact that they were evicted from their farms in the first place also made them question the notion of being able to move and settle anywhere in Kenya.

10. Multiple narratives¹⁰

i. Paul Thiongo

This is the narrative of Paul Thiongo who is the leader of a group of IDPs who were evicted from Molo. He is a 45-year-old male. Thiongo considers himself a resident of Rift Valley, because he was born in Nandi Hills and challenges the idea and common narrative that Kikuyu speaking communities do not belong to the Rift Valley. Indeed, Thiongo acknowledges that his origins are in Murang'a, in Central Province because that is where his parents came from before settling in the Nandi Hills area. Thiongo's parents were not landlords but simple people whose livelihood depended on working in the large tea plantations of the area. He clearly identifies his belonging to this region from the moment his parents moved there from Murang'a. In general, Thiongo feels that he belongs to the Rift valley and in particular, Nandi Hills. He considers it fallacious that some people can claim that he comes from somewhere else:

My parents came from Murang'a. They were tea pickers in Nandi at Chepkunyuk. I went to primary school in Nandi Hills and I was prosperous there. I ran an electronics shop business and had bought a piece of land in Kipipiri [Laikipia District].

Thiongo narrates a pattern of politically instigated hatred between the different communities living in the Rift Valley. He traces hate related speech from as far back as the mid-1980s when the Kikuyu were targeted for eviction. He remembers how “[i]n 1985 *walitaka kutufurusha* [they – the Kalenjin – wanted to

¹⁰ Interviews for these narratives were collected from the IDP settlements at Pipeline in Nakuru, Mawingo a few kilometres from Gilgil, and Kiamumbi in Eldoret in Nakuru. The raw narratives were collected by Dr. Felistus Kinyanjui and Dr. Isaac Tarus from Egerton University, the analysis and write-up was done by the authors of this report.

evict us], by forcing us to vote for Kimaiyo arap Sego during the mchujo [queuing voting-system]”.

Because the Kikuyu did not vote for the candidate preferred by the Kalenjin, tension began to build between the two communities. Thiongo recalls incidents where Kikuyu speaking communities were mocked by Nandi youths and warned “*mtaenda kwenu*” (you will go back to your home-areas). According to Thiongo, these were not empty threats. He recalls that, in the elections of 1992 trouble started again and this time non-Kalenjin, particularly the Kikuyu, were forced to move out of the Rift Valley. Thiongo recalls vividly what happened then and suggests that the instability was flamed by the fiery and emotive political statements made by the former President, Daniel Arap Moi. While addressing a political rally he had asked the Nandi, “Are there no men here?” This question was meant to challenge Nandi youth to show that they were men who could protect their area by not allowing “aliens” to thrive and prosper in their midst.

Thiongo remembers that in the aftermath of such political instigations the Kalenjin youth felt motivated by the challenge and responded immediately to the president. They left to burn houses belonging to the Gusii community and destroyed their property. While evicting the Gusii, the Kalenjin youths taunted the Kikuyu, warning them at places like Kosoiwo in Tinderet: “*sisi ni wenyewe*” (we the Kalenjin are the owners of the land). With the advent of multi-party politics in the 1990s, the situation worsened for the Kikuyu living in the Rift Valley with non-Kalenjin communities being particularly targeted for politically instigated violence especially in cosmopolitan areas such as Eldoret.

Thiongo traces the political trouble and evictions that befell him and his fellow IDPs as not a strange or new phenomenon. He narrates his situation as part of a long history of political rivalry between communities, misuse of political power by skewed politicians and tribalism. He recalls what happened in the past but has intimate knowledge of the latest evictions that forced him to become an IDP:

The Nandi began to close their shops and word went around that there was a jambo [undisclosed happening] that was to take place. I closed my electronics

shop, removed a few valuables in my house and left them for safe keeping with my Kikuyu tribesmen neighbours. I moved my family and went to camp at the police station. On 30 December 2010, at 10.00 pm, I heard shouts, commotion and screams. People were looting and burning down property belonging to the “enemy”.

How was the enemy identified?

Thiongo has indicated that his and his neighbor's property was destroyed because they were the enemy and continues to explain how they were identified amongst other people in the community:

A twig was placed on homes belonging to the Kalenjin to identify houses that were to be spared the destruction, there were also leaders who identified for the warriors which houses to be burned. Those who participated in burning our houses are people well known to us.

Thiongo describes the arsonists as marauding Nandi youths and recalled that, “Wielding arrows, they shot at any Kikuyu in sight”. For Thiongo, this marked the beginning of 21 days in which Kenya was burning.

Good and bad leadership

Thiongo's experience has led him to believe that there are good and bad leaders in Kenya. He associated the bad as those who made utterances during political rallies that instigated communal hatred and subsequently led to the eviction of non-Kalenjin communities from the Rift Valley. In regard to good leaders, Thiongo speaks highly of the “intervention by Uhuru Kenyatta”, if it was not for him, he adds “all Kikuyus would have been killed in Nandi Hills”. Furthermore, according to him, Uhuru Kenyatta “organized for their evacuation from Nandi”. According to Thiongo the military also gave them aid and thus he is thankful for their help.

He was however, not happy with the role played by the Kenyan police force and comments on the ethnic divisions that divided them:

There was a major problem with the police because the OCPD was a Kikuyu and his deputy a Kamba, but the OCS was a Nandi. There was bad blood among the police who came from different tribes. The Kikuyu OCPD shot one Kalenjin warrior on the leg because the warriors were also after the OCPD.

Thiongo considers himself and other IDPs lucky because the army came and assured them that they were safe. To rescue them, government vehicles were sent and Kikuyu evictees travelled in a convoy to Nakuru showground. This became a home for the IDPs for the next six months.

ii. Yusuf Kuria

Yusuf Kuria is another displaced person living in the Pipeline Area. He led those evicted from Makongeni in Eldoret. Kuria's narrative focuses on the consequences of economic exploitation of the poor by settler communities who own huge parcels of land and collude with state authorities to exploit the poor. He attributes the clashes as a direct result of the exploitation of the country's lower classes.

A cunning white landlord

The white landowners played the tribal card of divide and rule among the various ethnic communities, especially the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin and convinced the latter to evict the Kikuyu from the farm at Makongeni. Tension was heightened before and during the 2005 referendum. The Kikuyu who supported the "Yes" or "Banana" vote were earmarked as trouble makers and "punished". *Nyapara* (farm supervisors) who were Kikuyu speaking were demoted as uneasiness persisted between the communities in the farm. As Kuria narrates:

Mambo ya clashes [the matter concerning clashes] began during the 2005 referendum. This is when we were evicted from our farms in Makongeni farm, Rongai. This is part of the larger Banita farm. We were squatters and worked for Alphonse- a white sisal farmer. As squatters we had entered into an agreement with

the white man, whereby he was to deduct a certain amount of money every month from our salaries for six years, after which we would buy from him part of the farm. He was clever and this did not happen. The white man reneged on the deal and declined to allocate us land or refund us our deductions. This stood at about 250 million Kenya shillings. We sought political intervention through then-Member of Parliament for Rongai, Mrs. Alicen Chelaite. The mzungu [white man] was not happy. The majority of those who would have bought the farm were Kikuyu speaking although many laborers were drawn from amongst Kalenjin, Turkana, Gusii, Luhya and Luo speaking communities. Alphonse was clever. He exploited and created tribal tensions and pitted one tribe or community against the other. He was particularly angry with the Kikuyu speaking community whom he saw as the nuisance due to their persistent demands for their money.

Sensing imminent danger we sought peace

During the run up to the 2007 general elections and the months that followed, the management of Banita Farm held meetings with representatives of the Kalenjin, Turkana, Luo and Luhya workers, but left out the Kikuyu. These meetings took place at night and its deliberations were confidential and not to be shared with Kikuyu workers. Out of these meetings further mistrust developed between workers. When the Kikuyu began to sense imminent danger and threats they initiated peace meetings. The farm management assured the Kikuyu that all would be well, but this was unconvincing because other communities at the farm boycotted the peace meetings called by the Kikuyu. Kuria told us that:

We the Kikuyu speaking community frankly informed the farm management that tusidanganyane, tofauti zilizoko kati ya wa-Kikuyu na Wakalenjin ni kama zilizoko kati ya mbingu na dunia- [let's not deceive each other over the differences because the gap of understanding between the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin is like heaven and earth].

The Kikuyu thought that these differences were irreconcilable.

Youth were mobilized; this is how it happened

It was very clear that the farm management was instigating tribal animosities as Kalenjin youth began to gain confidence and warned the Kikuyu of the plans to evict them from the farm. According to Kuria, tension was already high two days before the polls. Then on 25 December, Kalenjin youth began to mobilize and organized themselves into groups to carry out the planning of the destruction. The Kalenjin youth had just undergone circumcision rituals; they roamed from village to village identifying homes belonging to Kikuyu. They targeted Kikuyu owned property for destruction. They were young and charged and nothing seemed to matter to them.

Bring in the chego (milk) to torch these houses

By 31 December, tensions had considerably escalated in the Rift Valley and Kuria was forced to move out of his home because armed youth were burning houses belonging to Kikuyu. These youths poured petrol on the houses before setting them alight. To disguise the petrol they called it *chego*, (milk in Kalenjin). Kuria heard the youth ask for *chego* and witnessed the burning of Kikuyu houses and recalls that on 1 January a small boy ran away from the sisal factory with arrows and a bow. Wachira then recalls how he “fled with his neighbor Nephat Wanjohi to inform the police at Maili Kumi Police station”. Later Wanjohi went to Banita Road to bring his wife. He did not return; he was killed.

According to Yusuf the *vita* (clashes or war) began on New Year Eve 2008 when:

The Kalenjin warriors were brought in three Lorries. They besieged the Kikuyu and burned their houses. Everything was burned down including the Mogotio Police station. They blockaded the road. The Provincial Commissioner had to use a helicopter to monitor the situation as we were being escorted to safety at Majani Mingi. If the Provincial Commissioner had not acted, all the Kikuyu in Makongeni would have been killed.

This is the narrative of Phyllis Wanjiru who lived in Kericho in the Rift Valley. She is married and a mother of seven children. She reminisces of the “good old days” when communities of the Kalenjin and Kikuyu co-existed without any trouble. Wanjiru remembers growing up with Kipsigis friends. She talks of the situation before politics and tribal tensions intensified in the Rift Valley:

We lived very well with the Kalenjin people; we liked them because they were kind. Animosities began in 1992 [Tuliishi na wa Kalenjin vizuri sana. Tuliwapenda kwa ukarimu wao. Uhasama ulianza 1992]. This was when Matiba contested during the multi-party era. Friendship between the Kalenjin and Kikuyu ended. The first clashes occurred in 1992. We escaped to Kericho. Friendship ended again in 2005 during the referendum, the time of voting “Yes” or “No”. In the market they insulted us, they said we had to go to Nyeri, they said that the Rift Valley was not Nyeri.

Phyllis Wanjiru continues to explain how the clashes that subsequently led to their eviction from the Rift Valley occurred. Particularly, she stressed the role played by politicians and their inflammatory remarks:

We [the Kikuyu] thought these were jokes but one MP addressed a meeting and she said “Madoa doa iondolewe” [remove all the spots]. Kwanzia hapo [from that moment] animosity between the communities of Kikuyu speaking and the Kalenjin was heightened. We held peace meetings but after 30 December marauding youth could be heard shouting that Raila ako mbele na ameshinda [Raila was ahead and has won].

Be warned, a prophecy will be fulfilled. Ondoa madoa doa (remove all spots)

According to Wanjiru, the violence was premeditated. Meetings had been held and youth were encouraged to evict “aliens”. Some of the statements made by politicians had encouraged communities to evict the Kikuyu. These included

statements like “the war is 42 versus 1”,¹¹ and other campaign slogans which encouraged violence including politicians promising to remove all weeds (*nitatoa kwekwe yote*) from the Rift Valley when elected.

The situation had been volatile in the Rift Valley and it was clear that trouble was looming for the Kikuyu community. Wanjiru recalls being warned by forest guards on the evening of 29 December, to move their children to safe places as fighting was expected. It appears that the forest guards had knowledge of the youth hiding in the forest who were receiving training and preparing to attack. When they did attack, so much property belonging to Kikuyu was destroyed and many Kikuyu were murdered. The Kalenjin had claimed that it was a fulfillment of their prophecy *Koitalel Arap Samoei*; a legend which foretold that foreigners would vacate Kalenjin territory after 100 years.

The police? Which police? They were all compromised

The situation in the Rift Valley had obviously reached a level whereby it was impossible for Kikuyus to live there without the risk of harm. Unfortunately, they were not going to be helped by anybody and the vast majority of them could not flee the area. After all, where would they run to? Wanjiru explains that even police did not provide them with any security:

The OCPD at Kericho was a Luo. He did not protect all impartially. The police officers from North Eastern Province¹² were neutral during the violence. The OCPD at Kericho was biased. We slept in the forest, in the bushes. While houses were being burned and people were being killed the police officers retorted that “na kazi iendeleo” [work is continuing].

Coupled with the hostility caused by the vote tally, Wanjiru also attributes the intensification of violence as a reaction to the murder of Mellitus Mugabe Were, a Kenyan MP. Rumors spread that the Kikuyu were responsible and this aggravated the situation. In the Rift Valley Kalenjin youth vandalized property and looted

¹¹ It apparently encouraged the 42 tribes of Kenya to fight against one tribe (the Kikuyu).

¹² This refers to policemen who are probably of Somali ethnic identity.

businesses which forced the police to shoot and kill some of them. In retaliation there were attempts to burn down the police station and a police officer was killed.

iv. Moses Mbugua

Moses Mbugua is 36 years. He was born in Ainabkoi in the Rift Valley and went to school at Kapngetuny Secondary school nearby. In school, he only had Kalenjin friends because there were only three Kikuyu speaking pupils in his school. Despite his upbringing, he has experienced all the evictions that had occurred in the Rift Valley and like many other IDPs traces the trouble back to the 1990s when he and other Kikuyu families were evicted. His narrative is that of a young man coming face-to-face with despair and the vagaries of ethnic animosities. He does not understand the reason for him facing constant evictions from the Rift Valley. He argues that he was “born and bred in Ainabkoi” and wonders where is he expected to go.

You say YES, we say NO

Mbugua blames politics based on ethnic identities for the violence. He says trouble started in 1992 when Kenneth Matiba was competing for the presidency with Daniel Arap Moi. It was Moi who wanted the Kikuyu evicted from the Rift Valley in order to disenfranchise them and deny them the opportunity to vote and thereby reduce Matiba’s chances of winning the presidency. The trouble was political because whenever Moi won, the anger against the Kikuyu ended and would be revived in the next voting period. Mbugua says of the political situation from 1992 onwards:

We are orange [chungwa], they are banana [ndizi], and when they say YES, we say NO. The urge to fight [roho ya vita] began with Moi because in 1992 there was no animosities and fear between the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin. And in 2002 there was no major problem because Moi was not vying for the presidency and the competition was between two Kikuyus, Uhuru and Kibaki. In 2005, there

was the Chungwa and the Ndizi. The Kalenjin did not want to be on the same camp with the Kikuyu. It was a must for the Kalenjin that when the Kikuyu says YES, they will say NO.

Dirty politics

According to Mbugua, former politicians who had lost their elected posts and were trying to regain them again were also to blame for the violence. These politicians used inciting and vengeful language to create animosity between the communities:

Politicians gave inflammatory speeches, because they were so desperate to win the favour of the Kalenjin speaking communities. This contributed enormously to the violence. They said there were too many Kikuyus in the Rift Valley; they must be evicted [wafurushwe] from Burnt Forest. They said that the Kikuyu were weeds [kwekwe] and that they should be removed in the same way you weed your farm.

Mbugua boasts of his interest in politics and narrates how he participates in elective politics himself. Yet he finds some political behavior shocking:

I was interested in elective politics as a council member. I was in KANU. There were serious differences between PNU and ODM near the election period. Uhuru had called a campaign meeting in Eldoret North to drum up support for PNU. Because KANU was part of PNU, I attended to represent my party. There was a Mr. Bii of KANU who vied for the Eldoret North seat against William Ruto. It was a dirty experience for me. It was clear Uhuru was not welcome. War was imminent. During the campaigns stones were hurled at Uhuru. He was extremely unhappy and left in a huff by helicopter. William Ruto arrived immediately after Uhuru had left and held a meeting. He praised the crowd and said that they had done well to chase away KANU/PNU. He told them that Rift Valley belonged to ODM and if PNU wins there will be no peace.

Furthermore, as Mbugua explains:

During their campaigns ODM warned of strong winds blowing [upepo mkali], making it clear that the Kalenjin were preparing for war. Immediately after Kibaki was declared to have won the election, violence erupted in Burnt Forest. At Kondoo and Rorien houses were set on fire from as early as 7pm in the evening after the announcement. The area Chief was a Kikuyu, he wanted to consult with the DO and the DC but their phones were switched off. Because I am a politician I called my Kalenjin friends but their lines were switched off too. From the hill where I was, there were no vehicles. I could see tires burning.

Because of the overwhelming burning of house belonging to Kikuyus, Kikuyu youths set out on a revenge mission. They killed many Kalenjin. This led to further reprisal attacks against the Kikuyu communities. Mbugua explains what happened in his area:

In the morning, the Kalenjin warriors surrounded Rurigi farm carrying crude weapons including rungus, arrows, slings and jerry cans of petrol. There were about 7,000 youths. They were transported with the help of a vehicle belonging to a well-known person. Together with the youth and the Kalenjin warriors was a known council member. They burned houses in Rurigi, Kamwiyu and Kondoo. They stole livestock and property and raped women. The police attempted to contain the situation but they were overwhelmed by the large crowd. Gradually, the police managed to take some Kikuyu to the compound of Arnessens secondary school. They said it was easier to protect them in one place. People carried only what they had at that moment. There were about 200,000 people from Burnt Forest who were camping at Arnessens Secondary School and others had found shelter at the nearby Catholic Church.

However, Mbugua speaks about the terrible fate of those that found shelter at the Catholic church:

On 1 January 2008, the Kiambaa church was burned down. People had become scared and feared living in their houses; they were living in the small mud

building used as a church with their children. This building was burned down with all the children inside burned to death.

Unfortunately, camping at Arnessens Secondary school was not safe either because the menacing Kalenjin youths followed them to the school with the intention to evict them. As Mbugua mentioned, although the difficult situation faced by the police contributed to their failure to provide security for the IDPs, there were differences between the policemen who came from the various ethnic communities; some appearing to support the violence committed by the Kalenjin youth.

Being an IDP is horrible

Mbugua laments the life of an IDP; it has made him lose his pride and independence:

This life of dependence and being provided with food [ya kupewa chakula] is horrible. The first time at the showground, I cried the whole night. I had nothing except my light shoes. I was with my wife and had only one blanket for five children. All the good things I had were all gone. I was helped by other IDPs with a blanket for my children. Our biggest problem was food. The only food we were given was one daily lunch/supper at 4.00pm.

As previously mentioned, the government has encouraged IDPs to return to their former homes with Operation Rudi Nyumbani expected to provide the IDPs with enough money to rebuild their lives upon returning to their former homes. Some like Mbugua have made an effort to return but they were not convinced of their safety:

In late 2008, I attempted to return to my former home at the Drys Farm. I found the beacons that marked the boundaries to my farm had been removed. I knew I could not stay. The second time, I visited the farm was to bury my relative who had died of pneumonia. My other relatives and friends still live in the transitional camps. IDPs still fear for their lives, they are not sure of any

guarantees of their life and safety [Bado wanahofia maisha yao. hatunaa uhakika na maisha].

In his narrative, he also made the following points:

- *The government didn't protect its citizens and their property.*
- *IDP children have been affected psychologically.*
- *Voting is a right of every Kenyan, but when they voted they suffered and the government has not done anything to help with their plight.*
- *IDPs cannot return to their former homes, there are no homes for them there.*
- *Talks about peace and reconciliation are just hype. How do you reconcile with someone who stole your property, your cows?*
- *Reconciling needs IDPs to heal first. If IDPs get back their stolen property, then they can easily forgive and forget.*
- *The government should help the victims settle first.*

Despite the experience after voting, Mbugua still remains confident in the power of democracy and vows that he “will vote again for the referendum. It is a civic duty to vote. I will vote in 2012”.

v. Peter Nguru

Peter Nguru was evicted from Eldoret where he had lived for 20 years. He describes his adult life:

I am a mechanic by trade; I repair vehicles. My home is Ngware in Othaya but I left Nyeri in 1980. I have worked in Nairobi, Kisumu, Meru, Nyeri and Eldoret. Amongst all the places I have worked, I liked Eldoret the most because of its climate. I married a woman from Kitale. I was not affected by the clashes in 1992 because at that time the police were better organized. In 2007, the police betrayed us and did not provide adequate security for the victims [waathiriwa]

of the violence. On 29 December 2007 at about 3.00pm, tension started. People fled to various police stations and churches.

Nguru recalls that the violence was planned and that Kalenjin warriors moved in groups of hundreds, making it possible for them to invade a plot and within a short time raze everything to the ground. The burning of houses was well organized. Those who burned the houses ridiculed us saying “If you are men why are you not taking care of your wives and houses?” According to Nguru the situation worsened (*mambo ikachacha*) on 30 December when people had to move to the Eldoret Police station for safety:

When I realized that things were deteriorating, many people were coming to the church compound. I made the painful decision to leave my home of 20 years. I hired a lorry to transfer my family and the few belongings we had salvaged to the Nakuru showground.

Nguru reflects on the hard life of an IDP:

From 2009 I have been doing small jobs. When the government compensated us with 10,000 I bought my share in this Makongeni Farm. I am surviving though life is hard [maisha ni ngumu sana]. I tried doing mechanical work. I realized I was not making any headway. It was expensive because whatever money I made, I spent it on bus fare. I went to Busia to try and earn a living there. But life proved difficult there. It is for people who belong to that place and not for outsiders [Maisha ni ya watu ya huko]. Life in Busia is sweet for those who do not care [maisha ni tamu huko]. I cared because I have a family. My wife has survived by keeping rabbits for sale which fetches a good price. IDPs are neglected by the government. We survive on hand-outs from humanitarian groups.

Being an IDP has also impacted heavily on Nguru’s identity:

Before 2007, I thought of myself as a Kenyan first and then as a Kikuyu second. But now I am Kikuyu first and secondly a Kenyan. My Kenyan identity is gone.

My children have been forced to repeat classes, change schools and even become a burden to relatives. I wonder if you go to the Kenya-Uganda border, are you called a Kenyan and not a Kikuyu. In Tanzania one is known as Kenyan, not as Kikuyu. However, saying I am a Kikuyu would be dangerous in some places. But I will go back to Eldoret if healing and reconciliation efforts are successful.

vi. Pastor John Maina

Biblia kando (keep the Bible aside)

Pastor John Maina is a religious and spiritual man, but also a businessman. Self-admittedly his narrative is a sad one. He speaks sorrowfully about the internal contradiction of identity which he feels. Maina is of Kikuyu parentage, but having been born and raised in Kuresoi and having lived amongst the Kalenjin, he considers himself a Kipsigis. Furthermore, he was inducted into Kipsigis culture and went through the Kipsigis circumcision ceremony with other 12 other boys who became his age mates (Bakule). Maina always had good relationships with the Kalenjin who became his close friends in High School.

Yet, his individual closeness with them was affected in 1992 when then-president Moi visited Molo and made inflammatory statements that created fear amongst the Kikuyu. Recalling this event, Maina remembers Moi saying “ukitaka kufukuza ndege choma kiota” (when you want to chase away birds you must burn the nest). This directly pitted the Kalenjin against the Kikuyu and ignited ethnic clashes in the area.

Maina thinks that the PEV of 2007 began from the period of the referendum when there were clear warnings of trouble ahead. He said remarks from Kalenjin leaders like “*mtu mwenye akili atoroke mpaka Gilgil*” (anyone who is sensible and cares for their lives should vacate Kalenjin land and go as far as Gilgil) were clear warning signs. Maina also talks about the warning he received from his Kalenjin friends who told him in December 2007 to leave for his own safety: “*ondoa family mpaka Gilgil wacha nikuambie mambo itachacha*” (remove your family to as far as

Gilgil, things will get hot here). According to Maina the PEV was at its worst in the area between 1-16 January 2008:

Houses continued to be set alight simultaneously in Sirikwa, Chebelyon and Kachura, among other areas. As a Kikuyu I realized we were not safe. My colleague, a fellow pastor supported the burning of houses. I asked why? and he responded: "Biblia kando" [put the bible aside]. And warned me "hata wewe lazima uondoke" [even you must be evicted]. I was shocked. Kalenjin friends of mine did not want to talk to me. In my opinion all policemen should be recruited from North Eastern Province, police officers from there were impartial throughout the crisis. They protected everyone.

Pastor Maina summarizes his narrative and raises the following issues:

- Reconciliation (maridhiano) cannot work until there is healing. In two years who has healed?
- The so-called peacebuilders to help IDPs are all in business. They move from embassy to embassy and from NGO and NGO soliciting for money. They all want sitting allowances.
- IDPs have many problems, especially school fees for our children in secondary school.
- Peace for whom? The reconciliation teams are using IDPs to make money. They use people who know nothing. To date there is no peace in Molo.
- Healing should start afresh. The right people should be engaged to reconcile communities.
- I am happy but not proud to be Kenyan.

vii. Joseph Ojiambo

Joseph Ojiambo is a 45-year-old man. He is a Luhyia who came to Makongeni from Busia in search of employment at a spinning factory. The factory was owned

by a white man but all the managers and the foremen were Kalenjin. According to Ojiambo: “The Kalenjin colluded with the *mzungu* to undermine non-Kalenjin workers in the factory. Employees held demonstrations but the *mzungu* did not care”. Ojiambo states that great effort was made to ensure their grievances at the farm were addressed. For instance, they “sent a delegation to State House where President Kibaki ordered the PC to ensure the *mzungu* pays the workers our wages but nothing happened because the *mzungu* obtained a court injunction”. According to Ojiambo, during the election period, employees of the factory who sought specific rights were politically and tribally branded for doing so. It appears that workers who those agitated for the payment of wages were branded PNU supporters and criminals. The owner and the managers victimized those who sought payment and threatened to sack them from jobs at the farm.

Ojiambo talked about the rights of non-Kalenjin workers at the farm, especially the right to join any political party even though such a party was not popular in the region. He laments: “Why should they punish us for joining PNU? Joining a party of choice is a prerogative of everyone”. Ojiambo was aware of the consequences of his political opinions: “On the day of elections, I slept outside because we were told that all those who belonged to PNU would be attacked”. According to him homes belonging to non-Kalenjin were marked to be burned down that night:

The chief of the area had a list of the houses to be torched. Those who burned houses parked their vehicle at the chief's house. The burning down of houses in fact began on the 27 December and became vicious on 5 and 6 January. On 6 January they attacked the chief's camp took the guns belonging to the Administration police and took those who were stationed at the Chief's office hostage. Meanwhile at the factory, the mzungu offered to provide transport for those who wanted to flee the area. He was not helping; he wanted to find a way to escape paying the accumulated wages owed the workers. We also learnt that it was a trick by the mzungu to get us all killed by the warriors. The OCS was a Kalenjin and he seemed to be aware of the plan. Two lorries were provided and were told to change routes because the Mungiki were coming. All the gates had been closed from both sides. A massacre was in the offing. Luckily a close friend

of mine had warned me not to board the lorry and I heeded his advice because I wanted to run away from Majani Mingi. All of a sudden the Kalenjin warriors emerged from the sisal plantations where they had been hiding. They shot at the lorry using arrows and also wanted to burn the Lorries. I saw people being shot with arrows. Madegwa, a local policeman shot one of the warriors but they were too many. The Kalenjin were everywhere. Luckily three helicopters emerged from the skies and these scared the warriors. The helicopters escorted them out of death into safety at Nakuru show ground. Now here I am at the IDP camp. The government gave me 10,000 shillings and I joined in with fellow IDPs to purchase the small parcel of land at Pipeline. I have been to Banita only once and the Kalenjin now use the land under dispute for grazing. I am comfortable living with the Kikuyu because they are Bantu like me. I do not understand why the Kalenjin are arrogant as if Kenya belongs to them alone [ni yao pekee yao]. Kenya is for all us and despite the suffering I am proud to call myself a Kenyan. At the camp, we suffer due to lack of food, water and medical facilities but still najivunia kuwa Mkenya [I am proud of being Kenyan].

viii. **Stephen Gitau Wanyoike**

Stephen Gitau Wanyoike said the following:

My narrative is very similar to the one narrated by Joseph Ojiambo. I used to work with him at the spinning Factory. The mzungu effectively used the Kalenjin warriors to avoid paying the workers about 150 million shillings that he owes us. He even never remitted the usual government deductions to KRA, NHIF and NSSF. My only questions and I am looking for answers on the following: Where was Kibaki when the Kalenjin were killing and chasing us like rabbits? Who is this mzungu that even the government fears to force him to pay our wages? We are tax payers like all Kenyans and deserve protection. I did not take any land from the Kalenjin but why did they want to kill me? Now at Banita the land has been shared and given to the rich Kikuyu and Kalenjin. So you see, the rich are not tribalists, tribalism affects the poor the most.

In the Rift Valley animosities were always associated with the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin ethnic communities. Yet, people from other communities suffered too. They also did not have places to go and have ended up being IDPs. One such person that was interviewed at Pipeline was Nora Moraa, a 47-year-old mother. She is neither Kalenjin nor Kikuyu: she is Gusii (also known as Kisii) from Nyaribari-Masaba. She was not wealthy and did not own any farmland; she was merely selling charcoal to make ends meet. Yet she also suffered and was chased away from Londiani. She told of the rumors she heard about the eminent eviction of non-Kalenjin from the Rift Valley:

Around the election period in December 2007, I began hearing rumors that the place where we were selling charcoal would be cleared to look like an airport. This field was a popular market place for non-Kalenjin mostly Kikuyu, Gusii and Luo. From 25 to 26 December that story was not a rumor anymore; Kalenjin warriors descended on it with bows and arrows.

She also describes the efforts that she went to protect her family:

It was shocking; the warriors were looking for male children to kill. I dressed all my sons in female clothing to disguise and protect them. On New Year's Day we spent the night at the police station but it was not safe there either and we felt unwelcome and unwanted. The OCS at the police station said it was not safe for us. There were signs of war everywhere. Kikuyu shops at Londiani were burned down. Kenya became another country. I wanted to go to my home in Gusii but I could not. All roads had been blocked. There were many vehicles transporting people to Nakuru and I joined in a journey to the unknown. Life was a real misery.

Within a week of staying at the show ground in Nakuru I delivered a bouncing baby boy. I named him Kibaki. He is going to remind me of the suffering I endured because of voting for Kibaki. But does he know or care? Does he know that he has let down many Kenyans? We live in tents like

chokora. We IDPs have no medical facilities. Who cares? Nobody. Our children have no access to education. We feel insecure. We hate ourselves [tunajidharau].

x. Grace Kemunto

Do you have boys? Boys are endangered

Like Norah Moraa, Grace Kemunto is Kisii or Gusii but she was born in Kericho in the Rift valley. She is 52 years old. She says that the PEV was planned from 2005, but that despite this, most residents of Rift valley were caught unaware. Yet, she considers herself and her children lucky because they did not suffer the violence experienced by others. She recalls:

I am lucky to be alive because one of my Kalenjin neighbours warned me that the situation was not going to be good. She told me if I was thinking of going to Kisii, I might not be able pass Kericho on the way there. On 27 December I went to vote but when I returned to my house my Kalenjin neighbor told me to take my boys away and said “Leo sioni kama ni kuzuri” [I do not think that today will be a good day] because the Kalenjin warriors were out to kill non-Kalenjin males and boys.

Grace is very thankful for the help that she received: “I really thank my neighbor for warning me”. As she had young sons, she also faced the same problem as Norah Moraa and so similarly dressed her sons in female clothing to disguise them.

Trouble started when the presidential results were announced over the radio. Immediately the Kalenjin blocked the road and lit fires. We could not escape with anything. My family dispersed each scampering for safety. We were put in a vehicle by the government and brought to Nakuru showground. When we arrived in Nakuru there was no peace either. Fighting had also started in Nakuru. It was terrible. There were thousands and thousands of people sharing

a small space. When the government gave us 10,000 shillings through the operation Rudi Nyumbani program we bought this land.

It's hard being an IDP, we are hopeless, like outcasts

Grace Kemuto narrates the difficulties faced by IDPs and how their rights as citizens are violated:

Life is hard. Nobody cares about IDPs. We are hungry; we do not have enough food. We have many children to feed. We have no jobs. Nobody wants to employ an IDP. Our children suffer. They go to school in the morning on empty stomachs. What is the future of IDPs in Kenya? We plead for government help. Nobody wants to have anything to do with an IDP person. We are treated like outcasts. We are blamed for our predicament. People take advantage of IDPs. Are we not Kenyans like others? Where is the government?

xi. **Alice Etoo**

Do not mix maize and beans

Alice Etoo is a 30-year-old woman from the Turkana ethnic community. She is married to a Kikuyu, whom she met and fell in love with at Mogotio. Alice and her husband were a famous couple at Mogotio. They were active in politics and supported the PNU during the election of 2007. They used to sing the PNU slogan *kazi iendelee* (let the work continue) and were not shy to wear PNU T-shirts expressing their political opinions. It was after all, their democratic right to do so. Alice and her husband were determined to ensure that Mwai Kibaki won the presidency. When the violence began after the election results were announced Alice knew they would be among the first targets. She sought shelter at the Police Station at Mogotio and later relocated to the Nakuru Showground. They used their 10,000 shillings to pay for the small plot of land that they have built their shelter on at Pipeline IDP transition camp. Alice has suffered as a result of her political activism. But at a personal level she has faced rejection from her family

because she married a man from the “wrong tribe”. She told us of her predicament:

My parents are in Mogotio. They do not want to see me. They say I brought them trouble by marrying a Kikuyu. They do not want to see me because they fear that they would be victimized by the Kalenjin. I visited them once and they asked me to leave because I was going to bring them trouble. They said “Go back to your Kikuyu husband. Kikuyus are not wanted at Mogotio”.

Alice laments how she is blamed by her parents because of her inter-ethnic marriage which they likened to “mixing maize and beans”. The common narrative of identity in Mogotio says that the area should belong to the Kalenjin, Luhya and Turkana communities but not the Kikuyu. However, Alice is aware that such a narrative does not resonate with all Kalenjin people. For instance, she knows that some Kalenjin are remorseful about what happened and that according to her they blame “the devil” for influencing them to chase away the Kikuyu from Mogotio. Alice supports inter-ethnic marriages as a way to minimize ethnic tensions in Kenya.

xii. Purity Wangari

Purity tarnished

This is the narrative of the experience of PEV victim Purity Wangari. She is 24 years old and widowed after her husband was killed in their house during the violence. She says:

I got married when I was 21 after completing High School. I am Kikuyu and my husband was Meru. Our wedding was conducted in the now burned down Kiambaa church, Eldoret in August 2007. I gave birth to my child in May 2008. My husband’s parents live in Meru, but my husband was working as a salesman at a company in Eldoret. We had rented our own house at Langas, Eldoret. My

parents owned land in Burnt forest. Their house was burned down and all livestock stolen.

She also recalled how she was sexually violated and her husband killed by people she thought she knew:

My husband of four months was killed in our house at Langas. I know his killers. One of the killers violated me sexually. He said that before I got married I used to be boastful [nilikuwa nimenyeta sana]. While he was raping me, I had no choice but to cooperate, otherwise they were going to kill me. Maybe I should be grateful to him; he raped me but spared my life and did not allow the other thugs to rape me. He took me to his house. I later escaped to Eldoret showground to join my parents. I wish they had killed me. After all, what was life without my husband? They did all these things to me while I was pregnant.

Purity talks further about her ordeal:

I am still shocked by what happened to my husband. They killed an innocent man who wronged no one. His cries will haunt them forever. They did not know that he was a Meru and not a Kikuyu. Had they known he was a Meru, perhaps they would have spared him. Now I have a child to take care of. I have no money and no work. I had to join this trade [prostitution] to take care of my child. I have trust in God to protect me and enable me to abandon this bad life. A friend has promised to employ me as an attendant at his M-pesa business. I will not vote in the referendum as long as my parents still live in transitional camps at Burnt Forest. I cannot vote because I lost all identification documents and school certificates.

I saw it all, where was the serikali (government)?

Mugo Ireri is a disaffected Kenyan: he has lost faith in the government's ability to protect its citizens and he suffers from nightmares because of his experiences during the PEV. On the violence he says:

I saw it all. I saw many things that bring me nightmares. Those who burned our homes are people we have lived with. They joined strangers who chased us from our property. I saw with my eyes a man being removed from a matatu [a public transport mini-bus], stripped naked and told to say his last prayers and then hacked to death. Where was the serikali [government] when this was happening? What is the importance of government when people do as they please, moving around with machetes and killing? Those people were vampires who did not fear human blood. This question of land in Rift Valley is a serious problem. Who owns the land in the Rift valley? It is willing buyer-willing-seller. Kalenjins sell their land and then demand it back when instigated by politicians who call others madoa doa [spots].

Ireri talked further about his life so far and how he became an IDP:

I was born in 1956 at a tanning wattle company. My father used to work there. We lived there as squatters. In the 1980s, the company collapsed and the property was sold to other communities who chased us away. We had bought some land at Ya-Mumbi and built rental houses. All of those have now been destroyed and here I am, staying in a UNICEF tent. I sleep with my son in the same tent. Kibaki has abandoned us and went to stay quietly at the State House. Others have been given government land in Rongai District, but we know why politicians are giving out free land to IDPs, they want people to vote for them. It is the same competition between the Kikuyus and the Kalenjin. Food is a major problem in the IDP camps. On many occasions we sleep without food. The government tells us to persevere. Reconciliation without healing is difficult. The government must first of all return our property that was taken from us.

11. Conclusions and recommendations

This study expresses the context and meaning of narratives as they were told by internally displaced persons in Kenya and makes the following observations, conclusions and recommendations:

- The way that history is constituted, understood and explained has an important role to play in Kenyan society. As this report illustrates, the IDPs felt that they were displaced because of political differences, but also because of the destructive power of harmful historical narratives on ethnic identity.
- Displacement is a historical fact that Kenyans have experienced and attempts must be made towards eliminating the root causes of the displacement.
- The magnitude of the displacement as a result of PEV has gained prominence because of its unprecedentedness in the history of Kenya.
- The occurrence of PEV demands that the state bear the primary responsibility to ensure that a repeat of what happened does not do so again.
- It is necessary for the state to develop legislation and design policies to discourage arbitrary displacements.
- The state bears the primary responsibility for the protection of the rights of its citizens at all times. This responsibility becomes particularly crucial for those citizens who have faced physical violence, trauma and displacement.
- It is important that together with legislative approaches to address the concerns of IDPs, ways should be developed and encouraged to increase the overall understanding of the suffering of Kenya's IDPs.
- Cultural ways through which expressions of hurtful experiences can be turned into positive peaceful means of co-existence should be pursued in order to encourage healing in affected communities.
- Concerted efforts must be undertaken by the state and non-state actors to encourage peace in society. Particular attention should be given to

traditional ways in which communities can ensure peaceful existence after a period of confrontation.

- It is particularly important that traditional methods of conflict resolution between communities be studied and vigorously pursued while addressing the concerns of IDPs.

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