

## NATIONAL NEWS



# Raila's plea for peace with justice for everyone

ODM leader, Mr Raila Odinga's speech on Tuesday.

**O**UR country today stands at the crossroads of history.

Death and despair are everywhere. The national fabric has been broken. The very foundation of the State is crumbling. Violence is spiralling out of control. The security forces seem unable to act.

Unless we resolve to act quickly to save our nation, there might be no nation left to save. We have had a tumultuous and troubled past, but never have we seen the kind of bitterness that has engulfed our nation since December 30, when the disputed election results were announced.

I want to thank the international community and the mediators for responding readily and quickly to our crisis. We did not, in our darkest dreams, imagine that children and women would be burned alive in our beloved Kenya as happened on Sunday in Naivasha and earlier in Eldoret.

In many villages, towns and estates, Kenyans from different ethnic groups who have lived together as neighbours and friends for generations are now gripped by fear and are fleeing their cherished homes.

## CRITICAL TEST

We are being tested in a way that we never have before. But no grievance, not even one as huge as robbing you of the democratic birthright to elect your leaders, justifies the killings of the innocent. Nor does the killing of a loved one justify your taking the law into your own hands to exact revenge.

Today, what was the severest crisis in our history took another turn for the worse. The ODM Member of Parliament for Embakasi, the Hon Mugabe Were, was gunned down in cold blood. The death of any Kenyan is a tragedy, but when an elected MP is killed, the tens of thousands who elected him, as well as their families and communities, feel they have lost a part of them.

Kenyans have lived through that before, when Pio Gama Pinto, Tom Mboya, JM Kariuki and Robert Ouko were killed. But none of those assassinations occurred during a period of intense and inflamed passions that led to the present crisis.

The rage among Kenyans can so easily be uncontrollable. Those who planned and executed our beloved Melitus Mugabe Were knew this well. They want violence to escalate to achieve their evil designs.

We must not fall into the trap of the assassins. We will grieve, mourn, be angry and demand that the perpetrators be brought to justice.

But as I have repeatedly said, we must not resort to violence, however justified our anger might be. Violence only begets more violence.

The commitment to shun violence must be grounded in and sustained by a genuine effort to resolve the compelling national grievances, which remain unresolved.

## DETERMINED

We must, therefore, tell our people that their leaders are determined to work together to address the outstanding issues. Some of the issues have been with us since independence, and can be summed up as disparity, corruption and negative ethnicity.

Resolving them will take time, skill and political will, and a new Constitution along the lines agreed at Bomas. What needs the most urgent attention is a resolution of the deeply flawed results of the presidential election.

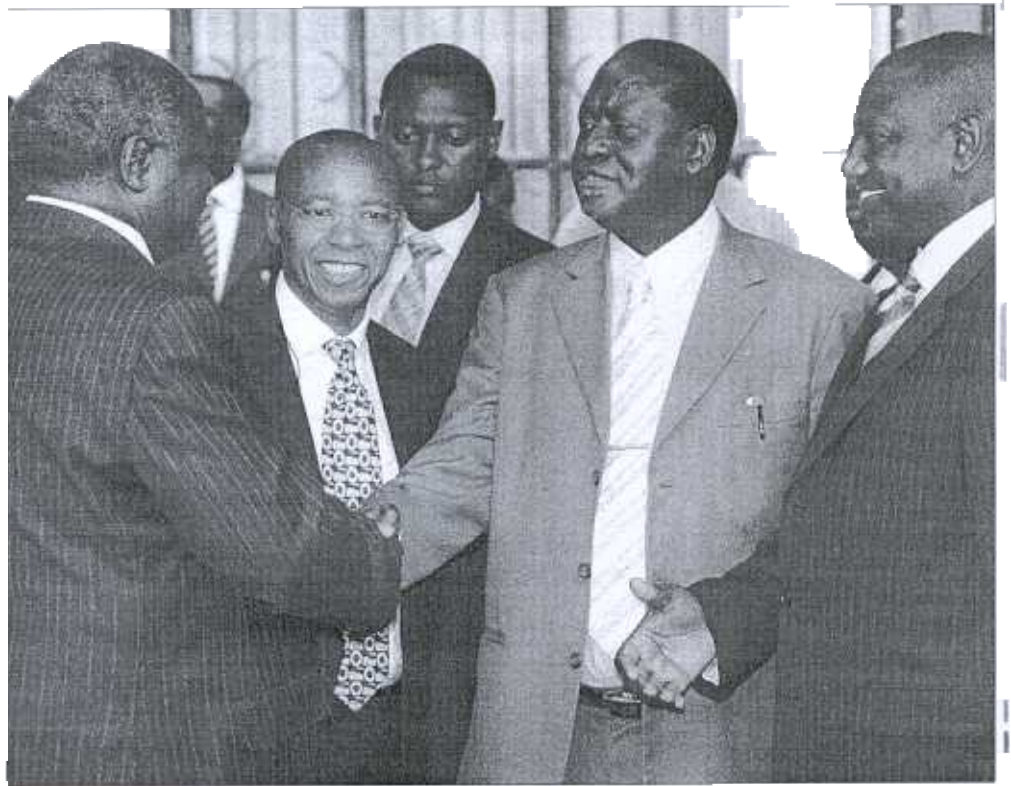
While our appeal for peace is uncompromising and unconditional, it will have effective meaning if we pledge that everything will be done to address the dispute.

To achieve peace, ODM must be allowed to communicate to our supporters to make our voice for peace heard. The ban on live broadcasts must, therefore, be lifted, and peaceful rallies permitted. The two huge gatherings in Kakamega and Kisumu last week, saw not a single act of violence.

I seek to be President of all Kenyans. Their death and suffering horrifies me. I will leave no stone unturned, nor fail to travel that extra mile, to ensure that His Excellency Kofi Annan's mediation mission between PNU and ODM succeeds.

This is the least I can do for our country. But this mediation process must quickly show our people that peace, justice and security are around the corner.

God bless you, God bless all Kenyans.



President Kibaki meets ODM leader, Mr Raila Odinga and Pentagon member, Mr William Ruto as ODM-Kenya member, Mr Mutula Ngunjiri (right) at County Hall, Nairobi on Tuesday.

## Kibaki calls for reconciliation

President Kibaki's speech during the launch of PNU and ODM talks on Tuesday.

**F**ELLOW Kenyans, today our nation is at a crossroads.

We are in a defining moment, when we must make the decision that we must regain the dignity of our nation, and restore the stability we have enjoyed since independence.

It is unfortunate that in some parts of the country, neighbours who have lived side-by-side peacefully for many years and have undertaken many cultural and social activities together have been incited to hate one another and view each other as enemies. This situation hurts me very deeply.

I recall the spirit of nationalism and unity that inspired the establishment of our nationhood on independence day in 1963.

I feel deeply saddened to see Kenyans confronting one another violently over issues that can be discussed and resolved peacefully through dialogue.

I therefore strongly condemn all acts of violence that have been witnessed in parts of our country.

We will from now henceforth implement stern measures against those who attempt to disrupt the peace or use

violence against peace-loving wananchi.

Fellow Kenyans, this morning, I was distressed to hear of the sad news of the untimely death of the Member for Embakasi, the Honourable Mugabe Were.

I join the rest of the country in mourning this gallant son of our nation, and again reiterate that the government will do all in its power to bring to book, those behind the brutal killing.

In the background of the sad

**AS LEADERS, WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO PREACH PEACE AND ACT ACCORDINGLY IN OUR DEALINGS WITH OUR FOLLOWERS**

events that have taken place in the last few weeks, we are also gathered here as patriots who love our country.

We are here to join hands with our international friends led by His Excellency Kofi Annan to begin what I believe is a critical step in the path of national healing and reconciliation.

Today, we are launching the process of National dialogue aimed at addressing the political situation in our country.

Kenya.

At the very onset, I wish to pledge my support and that of my entire government to this process. I am glad that this process seeks to discuss, not just the immediate actions that must be taken to restore peace in our country, but will also address the long-term solutions to the underlying issues that have caused the problems.

As I have stated in the past, I remain fully committed to national reconciliation.

As a nation, we must know that using violence against one another can never be a substitute to discussing with one another.

As leaders, we have a responsibility to preach peace and act accordingly in our dealings with our followers.

I encourage all our leaders to go to their regions and urge wananchi to pursue peace and reconciliation amongst one another.

**I** am therefore also making my personal appeal to all Kenyans to respect the sanctity of human life and the right of every Kenyan to live, work or own property in any part of the country.

It is important that we all respect this fundamental right of every Kenyan citizen.

In order to help in the resettlement of Kenyans who have

been displaced from their homes, I have directed that 32 fully equipped police stations be constructed within the affected areas. Sh700 million has already been released for this project.

In addition, I have also created a national fund for the mitigation of the effects of the inter-communal violence, to assist the victims of the violence.

Fellow Kenyans, as we launch this process of national dialogue let us all remain open minded.

Let us remember that there was a reason why the Almighty God placed us all together in this beautiful country called Kenya.

I appeal to each and every one of us to know that we only have one country called Kenya.

We must all play our individual roles in safeguarding our nationhood.

Finally, I wish to express my most sincere appreciation to Their Excellencies, Kofi Annan, Benjamin Mkapa and Graca Machel for the valuable time they have spent on this process.

On behalf of all Kenyans I say *Asante* and wish you and the two teams God's speed as you begin the process of national healing and reconciliation.

Thank you and God bless you and God bless Kenya.