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The Honorable George W Bush
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am a Kenyan American and am writing to you in connection with the human and political crisis currently engulfing my native country, Kenya.

I write to you as an individual but my views are to the word representative of millions of others expressed by Kenyans to whoever can hear them.

As you know, Kenyans went to the polls on December 27, 2007 to elect their president and other political leaders. By all accounts, the elections were conducted in a peaceful and orderly manner, with record turn-out in most precincts. Tallying of the votes at individual polling stations was also conducted peacefully and orderly across most of the country.

I was in Kenya during the elections and witnessed this in person at a number of polling stations I visited throughout the day, going into the wee hours of the morning when votes were being counted.

Unfortunately, however, when it came to announcing the results by the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK), Kenyans in total disbelief witnessed the most flagrant, shameless and unprecedented systematic tempering in the collection and announcement of poll results that resulted in the declaration by ECK that the incumbent president had won the elections when he, in fact, lost in a landslide to his major opponent, Raila Odinga.

Indeed, the rigging was so glaringly obvious, independent international observers, including the European Union (EU), concluded that the presidential election outcome in Kenya is not credible.

EU's preliminary report on 2007 elections in Kenya is available at http://www.eueomkenya.org/Main/English/PDF/Kenya_2007_Final_Preliminary_Statement.pdf.

Meanwhile, on being declared the winner by ECK, the incumbent president hastily and within minutes had himself sworn in as president at a State House function attended by a number of members of his government that had just been trounced at the polls¹.

Shortly thereafter, Mr. Kibaki, through one of his ministers, banned live coverage of news events in Kenya and instructed media editors to edit information given to the public. The minister also banned peaceful public demonstrations called by the actual winner of the presidential elections and his party. The ban remains in effect and is being enforced by police and soldiers with instructions to shoot-to-kill.

The fraudulent installation of Mr. Mwai Kibaki as president of Kenya and his subsequent actions aided by his henchmen is not only an affront to Kenyans everywhere, if let stand, it would destroy what little gains Kenya has achieved in democratic reforms and will in all likelihood result in unprecedented violence and turmoil and quite possibly, genocide in Kenya. It would also destabilize the entire East and Central Africa region which depends on Kenya's stability.

Mr. President, your leadership and, indeed, that of the United States is once again needed to make a difference in world affairs that affect the interests of the United States. Kenya is not only strategically important in the East and Central African region, it is an ally of the United States in its war on terrorism therefore its stability is paramount.

Unfortunately, however, Mr. Kibaki and his advisors believe the US, in weighing what to do with the current crisis, in light of Kenya's role in the war on terrorism, would more likely prefer to have Mr. Kibaki remain in power under the belief the US would rather deal with the "devil she knows" rather than the "devil she does not know."

Kibaki's thinking is flawed for a number of reasons and the US must not allow him to benefit from this flawed logic. Kenya has been and will continue to be a friend of the United States regardless of who is in power on either end for obvious reasons—assuming, of course, that Kenya survives this gravest test to her survival as a nation.

If nothing is done and Mr. Kibaki remains in power despite having handily lost in the elections, I am afraid the country would degenerate into civil war and possibly genocide because the anger among the Kenyan people is deep and unlikely to dissipate unless a solution to the crisis is found that reflects the will of the majority of its citizenry.

Needless to say, Kenya's disintegration into civil war would certainly be detrimental to the United States' own national security, given the country's role in the war on terrorism, not to say anything about the loss of lives and devastation such a civil war would cause.

¹ It is widely believed Mr. Kibaki was, in fact, sworn in before the ECK announced the results and the public was shown the video later.

Mr. President, there are a number of things the United States, through your leadership, can do to immediately bring about a peaceful resolution of the crisis in Kenya but I can think of four:

First, the US must demand that Kibaki lifts the media black-out and allow the free-flow of information the absence of which is causing grave anxiety, rumor-mongering and even death as people react to some of these rumors.

Second, the US must insist that peaceful rallies by Kenyans must be allowed and along with this, the incumbent Mr. Kibaki must immediately lift the shoot-to-kill order now in place that has resulted in innocent Kenyans being shot to death by trigger happy police and soldiers. The continued banning of peaceful rallies only delays the inevitable because people are angry and they must ultimately vent their anger.

Third, the US should immediately take steps to enforce Ambassador Frazer's pronouncement that it will not be business as usual with Kenya, if a resolution of the crisis is not reached. These steps should include at the minimum, imposition of sanctions on Kenya, cutting off non-essential aid, and the declaration of Kibaki and his clique as a *persona non grata*. I realize these actions may be draconian relative to the US standard policy in these matters but what Mr. Kibaki has done deserves nothing less, even as a matter of diplomatic courtesy.

Fourth and most importantly, the US must insist on formation of a transitional government with a mandate to organize and conduct new presidential elections in Kenya. This is the only fair resolution of this crisis because no one doubts that the elections in Kenya were severely rigged beyond the tolerable. Had this been the normal rigging that invariably takes place everywhere in closely contested elections, one may be inclined to accept status quo and forge forward.

The rigging that occurred in Kenya was, however, blatant and unacceptable by any measure. For the US, and the rest of the world for that matter, to allow Mr. Kibaki to nullify the will of more than 5 million Kenyans that went to the polls on December 27, 2007 with impunity would be contrary to the United States' own policy of promoting democracy everywhere, not to say anything about the violence and turmoil that is certain to ensue in Kenya were that to be the case.

I therefore kindly urge you, Mr. President, to use your gracious office and proven leadership, to assist us in reaching these goals, and to do anything else within your powers to ensure attainment of peace and justice in Kenya.

Sincerely,

/s

Samuel N. Omwenga