

Joining Hearts and Hands News Flash

Important Update: Now, More Than Ever!



January 9, 2008

I am sure that most of you have been reading about the political upheaval in Kenya. Kenya has been the jewel of democracy since its freedom from the British in 1963. On December 27th Kenya held its presidential elections. Up for reelection was Mwai Kibaki a member of the ruling Kikuyu tribe. His opponent was Raila Odinga, a member of the Luo tribe who was representing the disenfranchised minority tribes of the poor. The election was peaceful and voters turned out in record numbers. Unfortunately, the tallying of the votes was viewed to be tainted by European and international observers. On the 27th of December Raila Odinga held a commanding 1 million vote lead. Through vote counting “irregularities” over the next day Odinga ended up losing the election. Several voting districts reported more votes for Kibaki than the number of registered voters!

As a result of the minority tribes feeling cheated out of the election, riots and looting broke out all over Kenya. The cities worst hit were Nairobi, Kisumu and Eldoret. To date, over 600 people have died as a result of tribal fighting and police reaction to demonstrators. While calm has slowly crept back into Kenyan society, Kisumu remains unstable. Kisumu is the center of operations for *Joining Hearts and Hands*. All of our school locations are within 1 & ½ hours of Kisumu, where we live when in Kenya.

We have been in daily contact with our colleagues in Kenya. The most pressing problems now are the lack of food, fuel and work. Many small businesses were looted and/or burned to the ground (especially in Kisumu). Because of demonstrations, highway travel has been seriously curtailed. This has resulted in food and fuel shortages. It has also hampered the delivery of phone cards for mobile cell phones. This is the major means of communication in Kenya. Internet cafés are difficult to get to and many have been damaged.

Joanne and I were scheduled to return to Kisumu on February 10th. We will be delaying our trip until our colleagues in Kenya (John Mukolwe from Kisumu and Jastus Suchi from Nairobi) give us a report that the area is safe.

While the situation between Kibaki and Odinga is not yet resolved, each day brings Kenya closer to its former peace. We expect that we will be able to return when a unified government is agreed upon by the two parties. We hope this will happen soon as we have much to attend to in Kenya. **OUR CHILDREN NEED US AND AWAIT OUR RETURN!**

In the meantime, we are focusing on some immediate needs of the Kenyan people. Through our contacts in Kenya we are establishing centers for the distribution of food.

Our Kenyan sisters and brothers need us now **MORE THAN EVER!!**

Joining Hearts and Hands' mission in Kenya is more essential to life during this crisis than ever before. Your prayers at this crucial time are greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by responding to this e-mail or by calling Joanne or me at 585-377-8298.

Let's join hands with this Kenyan below calling for peace.



Bill and Joanne Cala

If you would like to make a special donation for FOOD and/or ESSENTIAL LIVING SUPPLIES (blankets, tents, medicine), please put RELIEF FUND on the subject line of your check.

Joining Hearts and Hands is an approved 501 (c) 3. All donations are tax deductible. Make checks payable to:

Joining Hearts and Hands

9 Fieldston Grove
Fairport, NY 14450

Did you know that many employers provide matching funds?!!

If you donated in 2007 we would gladly complete the paperwork for matching funds. A few of the participating companies are HSBC, Gleasons, Oppenheimer Funds, General Electric.