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Analysis

## In Kenya, Meeting of Rivals Raises Hopes for Peace

For the first time since a disputed election drove the country into turmoil, Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki and opposition leader Raila met Thursday for talks mediated by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. Analysts discuss the prospects for peace.



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**KWAME HOLMAN:** It was a moment Kenyans had hoped for, for weeks: President Mwai Kibaki and opposition leader, Raila Odinga, shaking hands in Nairobi, after talks mediated by former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan.

Their goal: to come up with a political compromise to end the recent violence in Kenya. But after the meeting, divisions remained.

**MWAI KIBAKI, President, Kenya:** After being sworn in as your duly-elected president of Kenya, I will personally lead our country in promoting unity, tolerance, peace and harmony among all Kenyans.

**RAILA ODINGA, Kenyan Opposition Leader:** My party and I have been ready and prepared to begin a long-awaited journey, which must end in restoring peace and justice in our troubled land.

**KWAME HOLMAN:** President Kibaki declared victory in last month's elections and was sworn in for his second term December 30th. Odinga lost, despite early election returns and polls showing his (Kenyan) Democratic Movement Party was in the lead.

Odinga declared the vote tally was rigged, sparking weeks of clashes across the country. Political demonstrations turned violent when police used tear gas and live ammunition to disperse the crowds.

The government reported 650 people have been killed, but Western diplomats and aid agencies estimate the number several hundred higher.

A quarter of a million people also were forced from their homes, as Kenyans of various tribes turned on each other with machetes and even torched a church full of women and children.

Although the clashes were sparked by politics, they have pitted minority tribes, such as Odinga's Luo, against the president's Kikuyu people, who've long dominated Kenyan politics and the economy.

The word of the meeting failed to stop new attacks. Yesterday, at least four more Kenyans were killed around Nairobi.

### No 'magic wand' for resolution

**JIM LEHRER:** And to Margaret Warner.

**MARGARET WARNER:** And for more, we talk to Makau Mutua, dean of the law school at the State University of New York in Buffalo. He's also director of its Human Rights Center. He's a native of Kenya.



**Makau Mutua**  
SUNY-Buffalo

“ There is enormous pressure from Kenya's middle class for Raila Odinga and for Mwai Kibaki to come together. I think that the choice of Kofi Annan as mediator is completely appropriate because of his enormous moral clout. ”

And Joel Barkan, a senior associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and professor emeritus at the University of Iowa, he served as an international observer in the Kenyan election month.

Welcome to you both.

Professor Mutua, after this nearly month of violence, this meeting took place today, and Kofi Annan pronounced it a "very encouraging development." Are you that encouraged?

MAKAU MUTUA, State University of New York: I think that the meeting today is a sign of hope after several weeks of violence, that there might be some closure at the end of this long, dark tunnel that Kenyans have been facing.

However, we must remember that this is just a first in a series of meetings that are supposed to lead to a resolution to this particular issue. I think that no one should expect Kofi Annan to wave a magic wand.

In fact, his body language today at the press conference suggested that he was cautiously optimistic about a hopeful sign, but I think we have to be cautious.

MARGARET WARNER: Do you agree, Joel Barkan, not a magic wand here?

JOEL BARKAN, University of Iowa: It is not a magic wand at all. This was an initial meeting. You shouldn't expect much when both sides are so polarized.

And it's my understanding that Raila Odinga, who gave an interview after the closing statement of your opening piece, expressed great reservations that President Kibaki had identified himself as the elected president of Kenya.

So I'm sorry to say the two sides tonight are probably as polarized as they were as before the meeting.

MARGARET WARNER: Yes, that statement, Professor, didn't seem to leave much room for compromise.

But first tell me this. These two political leaders have refused to meet for nearly a month, since the violence broke out. Why was Kofi Annan able to at least bring them together, when other pretty high-level mediators had not?

MAKAU MUTUA: I think there's a realization both in Kenya and within the international community that something had to be done to bring these two leaders together to find a resolution to this crisis.

There is enormous pressure from Kenya's middle class for Raila Odinga and for Mwai Kibaki to come together. I think that the choice of Kofi Annan as mediator is completely appropriate because of his enormous moral clout.

And I think, you know, both Mr. Kibaki and Mr. Odinga wanted to show Kenyans that each one wants peace. And that is why they responded to Mr. Annan.

## Political, ethnic violence

MARGARET WARNER: So, Joel Barkan, explain your view of why this violence erupted. How much of it was ethnically based?



**Joel Barkan**  
Center for Strategic and  
Int. Studies

“ The best prospect for a settlement in a stalemate like this is that the stalemate proceeds to what is a hurtful stalemate. And I think after three weeks in time, you're beginning to see that. ”

JOEL BARKAN: Well, the violence erupted because you had an election that was split right down the middle, and there are questions about its legitimacy.

Some observers saw that train wreck possibly coming, but hoped that the election would come. And, indeed, it did, in the run-up and through the count.

But then you had a count that was highly questionable, the supporters of Raila Odinga not accepting a legitimate process, which is really the test of an election: Will the losers regard the process as legitimate and accept defeat?

They did not. You had spontaneous violence on the part of ODM and Odinga's supporters.

And then you also, sadly to say, have had some state violence, the overreaction by the police, the killings, violence out in the Western Rift Valley that appears to be organized against Kikuyu settlements.

And so it's of several different types, and both sides have suffered greatly.

MARGARET WARNER: Professor Mutua, do you think the violence is mostly generated politically, or is there a tribal and ethnic component to this, as well? And if so, why?

MAKAU MUTUA: Well, I think we have to be very careful not to fall into the trap which appears to be the most common in most Western media. Every time there's a conflict in Africa, immediately people reach for tribal explanations to understand what's going on.

I think it's clear there's a tribal element to this, especially because what the Kikuyu, from which Mr. Odinga comes, and the Luo, from which Mr. Odinga comes, have a history of tension between them.

But I think that we must also understand that in a country where about half the population lives on a dollar a day, where there's high unemployment, there's a lot of poverty, there are high degrees of marginalization, high degrees of landlessness, that all of these deficits, all of these social dysfunctions, can be stoked by politicians who appeal to tribal ethnic loyalties to capture power.

And I think this is what happened. If you looked at the electoral campaigns, the way they were conducted, I think both parties, both the ODM and the PNU of Mr. Mwai Kibaki, appealed, nakedly, to tribal sentiments to whip up their supporters.

MARGARET WARNER: So, Joel Barkan, now that this genie is out of the bottle, what will it take for a political compromise that could quell the passions? And do the two leaders have control over that point?

JOEL BARKAN: Well, that's a lot to answer in just a very short period of time.

The best prospect for a settlement in a stalemate like this is that the stalemate proceeds to what is a hurtful stalemate. And I think after three weeks in time, you're beginning to see that.

Professor Mutua referred to the pressure by the middle class on President Kibaki. You're beginning to see both sides perhaps becoming more willing to sit down and bargain.

As for what the settlement would be, it has to be some form of power-sharing. I don't think that a rerun of the election within three months is viable because, first of all, there are some very clear modalities for the election itself; secondly, a devolution of power; and probably a transfer of some of the presidential powers before there's going to be a settlement in this case.



**Makau Mutua**  
SUNY-Buffalo

“ I think the fact that Kenya was a pro-Western country, which received a lot of tourists and a lot of capital from the West, accounts for this image of Kenya as a stable democracy, which, in fact, it was not. ”

## Western model for stability

MARGARET WARNER: Professor Mutua, let me ask you a big-picture question, which is -- and spoke of the image or the way the West often reacts to conflicts in Africa. One of the images in that Kenya is this island of stability in Africa or in that region of Africa, that it has a growing mid I think you both referred to, that it has had a booming economy for the last few years.

Is that image out of touch with reality? Or is this an aberration that can be turned around?

MAKAU MUTUA: Well, I think the image of Kenya as a beacon of hope and stability in Africa is and partially untrue.

For a long time, Kenya was not a democracy. From 1964 to 1966, there was some political space independence, but that political space was closed in the 1960s and really just opened up in 199

You know, so there has been long periods of repressive governments in Kenya, although the country has been stable. I think the fact that Kenya was a pro-Western country, which received a lot of tourists and capital from the West, accounts for this image of Kenya as a stable democracy, which, in fact,

You know, so I think there is that image that has been there. But I also think that it is because of that you are seeing all this interest by the Americans, by the British, and by others to bring pressure on Kenya to resolve this crisis.

## Preventing increased turmoil

MARGARET WARNER: Joel Barkan, a quick final question to you. I hate to ask you to do this because you see people out in the streets with machetes and you hear about killings like this. Could this spiral out of control into another Rwanda?

JOEL BARKAN: This question is often asked, but Kenya, I would say emphatically, is not Rwanda. There was a case of clear genocide, state-sponsored, systematic killing. That's not what's going on.

MARGARET WARNER: Of one ethnic group by another?

JOEL BARKAN: Of one ethnic group by another. That is not what's going on here. It's extreme. There is some element of state-sponsored violence, but not in the way that you saw in Rwanda.

That's a false parallel. In fact, just the opposite. What needs to be done here is a negotiated political deal.

MARGARET WARNER: All right.

MAKAU MUTUA: But I would like to warn that African states are fragile entities, and any African state could be reversed. It is very possible that Kenya could descend into chaos and into anarchy in which one group could start attacking another.

So while I agree with Mr. Barkan that Kenya is not Rwanda, I think that we should not take a false sense of solace. It is possible that this could spiral out of control. And that is why there should be pressure on these leaders to come to a mutual agreement.

JOEL BARKAN: And I would just add that I think there's a realization of that now among Kenyan



**Joel Barkan**  
Center for Strategic and  
Int. Studies

“ Kenya, I would say emphatically, is not Rwanda. Rwanda was a case of clear genocide, state-sponsored, systematic killing. That's not what's going on. ”

MARGARET WARNER: All right, we have to leave it there, but thank you both very much for be

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