

**TRANSCRIPT OF ELEMENTS OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE
BY THE KENYAN NATIONAL DIALOGUE AND
RECONCILIATION**

Serena Hotel, Nairobi, 1 February 2008

[Kofi Annan, as Chair of the Dialogue, read a statement summarizing the agreements reached by the two teams on the agenda and timetable, as well as on 18 specific actions to be taken to deal with the current violence. “We’re off to a good start,” he said. He then continued:]

ANNAN: I would want to thank the negotiating teams for really incredible work. Every Kenyan should be proud of the work they’re doing. We need your support; we need your understanding; we need your cooperation; and I’m sure it will be forthcoming. But what is important is that we move forward, that every one is conscious that what is at stake is not individuals. We are not destroying individuals, we are destroying Kenya, and we should be very conscious of that. And is that what we want?

So we are going to move forward, work very hard. Support us, and as I said yesterday, let’s be careful of the language that we use. Language can soothe; it can console; it can inspire. And yet it can hurt; it can incite and it can inflame. So we need your help.

And I don’t speak Swahili, but I understand that some of the local vernacular FM stations really are putting out hate messages. I appeal to them to understand that there’s one nation, one Kenya, and they should not destroy it. They should send out messages of reconciliation; they should plead for nonviolence and tell people to avoid vengeance and not to take the law into their own hands

Having explained how hard my colleagues here around this table are working and the determination with which they are moving ahead, it is obvious that every attempt is being made to resolve the issues at the table and no one needs to take the law into his own hands—and I say “his own hands” because it’s usually the men who commit these atrocities.

Thank you very much for listening to me.

[An interpreter then rendered Mr. Annan’s comments in Swahili. Members of each of the teams then made comments in English, after which Kofi Annan said:]

As you’ve heard, I think one principle underlying the proposals and our approach is that effective institutions are much more important than individuals, and we really want to strengthen institutions, the rule of law, and as you read the document and the agreement this underlines almost everything we’ve done.

I should also want to announce that over the weekend there will be no sessions. We will resume on Monday at 10:00 to 12:30 and then 2:00 to 5:00. That will be our schedule for the coming week; two meetings a day and we will keep pressing. Of course, we've said 10:00 to 12:30 and 2:00 to 5:00, but as you see, we work often way beyond these hours. And so we're going to push as hard as we can to get results.

We'll take a few questions.

QUESTION: Lucy Hannan from [ITN] Channel 4. Does Kenya have the capacity now required to provide the sort of security that you're talking about?

ANNAN: The security that we're talking about? Obviously, I hope the two team leaders will comment, but let me say that this is a big country and the conflict or the crisis points are not limited to one or two areas; it's quite well spread out. And I think everyone will have to admit that the police are a bit overstretched. I know that you all read the statement by President Kagame, but that has also to be put in context.

When I went to the Rift Valley last Saturday, when I came back I went to see the President to share with him what I had seen and indicated that it may be necessary to do a preventive deployment of the military to help contain the situation. And honestly, protection of civilians is an important secondary mission of any army. And I argued that when you have that kind of deployment, preventive deployment, impressive presence of the military, you sometimes are showing force in order not to use force because the perpetrators often fade away, and that the capacity of the military should also, where possible, be used to help the civilians who are displaced.

And when I read the statement by President Kagame—obviously he was speaking from his own experience—armies have a Commander-in-Chief and of course, all factors taken into consideration, the President will have to decide. But I think some military have been deployed. I've seen Air Force helicopters in the air and understand some are on the ground. But there's no doubt that the communities affected could use enhanced or increased security.

And we have discussed ideas and measures that can be taken and I'm sure the Government and security forces are also well aware that more needs to be done. And I hope they're taking creative and other measures to enforce this. But I think the point that has been made is law and order cannot be left to security forces alone. Individual citizens have responsibility; communities have responsibility. And in some cases we should help the police and the security forces. We should share critical information with them. We should be able to help them do their work. But of course the police must also understand that democratic policing means protecting the individual and his or her property.

Thank you.

[Statements were then made by the leaders of each of the teams.]

QUESTION: Thank you. My name is David Ohito from The Standard.. I have two questions.

ANNAN: Just one please. If you ask two we will answer one.

QUESTION: All right. I have a question. As things stand now, you know when you talked of freedom of assembly and freedom of the press, and you know currently there's a ban on live coverage for journalists and most local journalists, their lives are already in danger; most of them are [unintelligible] to the police that there are a group of people who are threatening them. Is your committee assuring that those who are working in the field of journalism, that their lives will be protected by those who are supposed to protect them, because most of them are fearing for their lives.

And on the same note, on the issue of the freedom of assembly, you know there's a ban already on the [unintelligible]. Do you mean to say that that ban has been lifted by your committee [unintelligible].

ANNAN: Our recommendations deal with all that. It's unfortunate that you don't have it yet, but you'll get it on your way out; it's all ready. And we raise quite a number of issues, including making suggestions of what should be done, including coming up with a code of conduct. And when you read it, you will see that we do cover all those issues that you have raised.

Thank you.

QUESTION: Tom Maliki of the Associated Press. You've talked of going to meetings to take a message out to the Kenyan public. Is there a schedule of that? Has that already been agreed on what form it will take?

ANNAN: Let me say that, first of all we are encouraging it generally and in fact as we speak I understand a group of twenty-four parliamentarians, a bipartisan group, have organized themselves to be able to do that. We are proceeding very quickly; we intend as a group also to go down to the ground and see things for ourselves. We haven't established a timetable yet, but we will let you know when and where we decide to go.

[The press conference was then declared ended.]

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