

Kenya Domestic Media, July 26st (Covering July 19th -25th)

By Laura Kern, MIGS Reporter for Kenya

State-owned media

Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) Website, Nairobi, In Somali, 20 July 10

- The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) chairman, Mzalendo Kibunja, has warned that use of hate speech during the ongoing referendum campaigns [for proposed constitution] will not be tolerated. He also denied claims that the NCIC was taking sides in the prosecution of hate speech. Speaking to KBC in Nairobi, Kibunja further said that the commission was investigating the distribution of threatening leaflets in parts of Rift Valley and assured Kenyans that the culprits would be brought to book.
- The NO camp had earlier called on Kibunja to take action against politicians who have reportedly threatened to block a No campaign rally in Suswa in Narok [southwestern Kenya] scheduled for Wednesday [20 July]. MPs Kiema Kilonzo, Joshua Kutuny and Charles Keter say utterances by three prominent Maasai leaders called for prosecution to avoid escalation of ethnic intolerance. Kutuny further challenged NCIC to rein in FM radio stations that were fomenting ethnic intolerance in their broadcasts ahead of the referendum on 4 August 2010. Noting that the role of the vernacular radio stations was critical, Kutuny petitioned Kibunja to prosecute the owners of the media houses that were spreading hate speech in their content.
- the Kenya Christian Church Leaders (KCCL), accused some leaders in the Yes team of issuing direct threats against those planning to attend the Suswa meeting. Canon Peter Karanja, KCCL chairman stated "Suswa belongs to all Maasais, including the majority who have rejected the proposed constitution. We challenge the minister for internal security to take responsibility for the security of all Kenyans including those rejecting the proposed law". Karanja, who is also the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) secretary general, urged the police and the government security agencies to ensure that those attending referendum campaigns have adequate security.

Privately owned media

The Star, Nairobi, in English 24 July 10

- Tension gripped violence-prone Njoro District, located northwest of Nairobi, yesterday after word spread that Kikuyus had been attacked by Kalenjin warriors at Ndeffo Farm. This area in the volatile Rift Valley Province has been a focal point of deadly ethnic clashes because the Kalenjin view the Kikuyu as settlers.

Anxiety beset the area after a man was attacked at trading centre dominated by the Kalenjin. Councillor Sammy Ng'ang'a of Kihingo dismissed the rumours saying the man was beaten up after being mistaken for a thief in Mauche. He said there was another incident in Ndeffo where a man was attacked by cattle thieves

The Daily Nation website, Nairobi, in English 24 July 10

- Anxiety over the impending referendum has set off panic among some big landowners, who are rushing to sell idle tracts in various parts of the country.
- A big landowner who recently put up for sale a 97,000-acre ranch in Samburu Division of Kinango District in the Coast Province; however, the transaction was blocked after a protest by squatters who claim the ranch used to be their ancestral land and hope it will revert back to them if the new constitution is passed.
- A senior lands official representing the ministry claimed that the transactions had been prompted by a clause in the proposed constitution to tax idle land. Others, he said, were driven by fear they could lose out when parliament fixes the minimum and maximum acreage an individual can own. Property consultant Justus Munene told Saturday Nation that the panic was real. He said the panic was triggered by government's failure to spell out how people would dispose of land above limits parliament would have set.
- There is a risk that this abrupt selling of large tracts of land will agitate the market.

KTN TV, Nairobi, in English 1800 GMT 23 July 10

- The USA has warned Americans travelling to Kenya to take note of increasing terror threats in the wake of the suicide bomb attacks earlier this month in Uganda. A travel advisory from the US State Department is urging American citizens in Kenya to be cautious while in public areas. It follows threats against Kenya by Somalia's Al-Shabab insurgents. Meanwhile, an AU summit currently going on in Kampala has endorsed a pledge by Guinea to send a battalion of troops to Somalia.

The Standard Website, Nairobi, in English 23 July 10

- The opinion poll by Synovate Research indicates 58 per cent of voters will vote 'Yes', 22 per cent intend to reject the proposed constitution, 17 per cent have not made up their minds, and 3 per cent said they would not cast ballots. Mbeere, Embu, Baringo and Trans-Mara districts lead with the highest numbers of undecided voters in that order and Waititu describes the regions a "hunting ground" for the 'Yes' and 'No' camps as the referendum campaigns enter the home stretch. The bedrock for the 'No' camp is Rift Valley (38 per cent) and Eastern (28 per cent) where the "Reds" have conducted aggressive campaigns.

- Of the 27% of self-described informed voters who would reject the constitution, the abortion clause (62 per cent), land (47 per cent) and inclusion of kadhi courts (40 per cent) were cited as reasons. The poll found that the more knowledgeable people are on the draft, the more they are inclined to support it with two in every three Kenyans who know "much of it" intending to vote 'Yes' and slightly more than a third (37 per cent) of those who know nothing going 'Green.'
- An overwhelming majority (91 per cent) indicated they planned to vote with majority citing desire for better governance and need to exercise their democratic right as motivation to vote. The media is the leading source of information on the proposed constitution with radio and television, owing to wider reach, topping the chart with 80 per cent and 50 per cent respectively.

The Standard website, Nairobi, in English 23 June 10

- Uganda's top policeman flew into Nairobi for secretive talks with his Kenyan counterpart on security issues. Sources who cannot be named said the inspector general of police, Maj-Gen Kale Kayihura, arrived in Nairobi on Tuesday [20 July] and met Commissioner of Police Mathew Iteere at Vigilance House [police HQ] for several hours. He flew back to Uganda with a dossier allegedly given to him by Iteere.
- Police headquarters was mum on Kayihura's visit terming it mutual. His visit is believed to be linked to the bombing of an entertainment centre in Kampala, Uganda, recently that killed 76 football fans. Kenya has been playing a leading role in combating terror in the region following threats from Somalia's militia group Al-Shabab.
- Kayihura's visit also came after Kenya handed over a terror suspect arrested in connection with the Kampala incident. Kenyan detectives handed over the suspect, identified as Ali Isa Ssenkumba, a Ugandan born in Butambala, Mpigi, to Ugandan authorities two days after the bombings.

The Star, Nairobi, in English 21 July 10

- The No camp's concerns over the Yes referendum campaign commercials intensified yesterday, but the Interim Independent Electoral Commission and the National Cohesion and Intergration Commission told The Star that they had not received any complaint about the adverts currently running on TV.
- The No side, led by Mutito MP Kiema Kilonzo, has bitterly complained about the Yes ads depicting Higher Education Minister William Ruto as contradicting himself and another showing footages of the post-election violence. No camp opponents called it "pure intimidation" and claimed there was a conspiracy of silence amongst relevant authorities
- But IIEC Commissioner Winnie Guchu, who was quoted in a section of the media admitting to ongoing investigations into the matter, said the commission had not received any complaints on the matter and was therefore not aware of any abuse.

She claimed that “due to the nature of work, we might not track all goes on TV. Personally, I have not seen the ads”.

The Star, Nairobi, in English 21 July 10

- Police are tracking down youths linked to the outlawed Mombasa Republican Council, after reports indicated they are undergoing military training to disrupt the 4 August referendum. Police in Kilifi coast have been unsuccessfully laying traps to arrest the youths. An officer at the Kilifi police chief's office said youths have been recruited and confined to a forest where they have been taking oaths. The group supports the Coast Province secession and is opposed to the draft constitution because it lacks proper federal structures. It has been registering sympathizers, mainly the Mijikenda and jobless youths. The Kilifi police chief, Grace Kakai, said Republican officials and networks are under close scrutiny as operations to locate them in forests and caves intensify.
- In March, over 20 youths were arrested in Kaloleni District for allegedly undergoing illegal military training for over two weeks. Police also recovered equipment suspected to have been used in taking oaths, including blood and several strips of white, blue and black clothes. The police boss said the group has links to the famous Mulungunipa and Kaya Bombo from Kwale in South Coast. Officials of the Mombasa Republican Council distanced themselves from the illegal training of the youths ahead of the 4 August referendum. The chairman of the council's sub-committee, Salim Mlamba, said besides the government refusing to register their organization, it is implicating it maliciously. "The police shot at over 10 youths affiliated to the council who had converged in various kayas [villages] to deliberate on the way forward over historical injustices. They are demonizing us," Mlamba said.

The Standard, Nairobi, in English 21 July 10

- The first batch of 3,000 out of 10,000 additional elite security officers has been dispatched to areas considered hotspots in the Rift Valley [Province], ahead of 4 August referendum. Sources familiar with the security deployment aimed at preventing the recurrence of bloodletting in the province's traditional cosmopolitan trouble spots, are drawn from [paramilitary] General Service Unit [GSU] and the Administration Police [AP]. The sources revealed the security machinery was under orders to do everything possible to ensure there would be no recurrence of cases of violence as happened after the release of disputed presidential election results in 2007.
- The next batch of 7,000 officers from the General Service Unit's crack and AP's Rapid Response Units, are expected to leave for the Rift in the next few days when logistics and financial support for the operation is sorted out. They are to report to specific police stations in the hotbed of cyclic politically motivated inter-communal skirmishes. Apart from the Rift, police security situation analysis also identified Nairobi as another perennial hotspot, but deployment of security personnel was considered unnecessary because it is home to security units such as

GSU, Police, and AP. Police commanders in the affected areas told The Standard they were content the situation was under control and were ready for the referendum. Most of them will work from the new stations set up in the epicenters of post-election violence.

The People, Nairobi, in English 21 June 10

- The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) in partnership with K24 yesterday launched a television talk show program that is expected to foster harmony among Kenyans. The program, funded by GTZ, will be aired countrywide as a way of making Kenyans understand one another and hence integrate. The talk show television program, which will be hosted by Louis Otieno, is also expected to heal the post-election violence emotional wounds in the country.

The Daily Nation, Nairobi, in English 21 July 10

- The International Criminal Court has placed three key post-election violence witnesses under its protection. The funds allocated to the Kenya National Commission for Human Rights (KNCHR) for a Witness Protection Agency had dried up after they had been spent on nine witnesses under their protection. The ICC took them in following fears they could be targets of the violence masterminds.
- Even though the ICC has declined to reveal anything, sources said a fresh team of detectives was flown in last week and has zeroed in on the six hotspots of Naivasha, Eldoret, Kisumu, Kericho, and Nairobi's Mathare and Kibera slums. Last week, Justice Minister Mutula Kilonzo confirmed that the investigators were here and were racing to tie up loose ends to meet a December deadline for chief prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo to bring his case before The Hague.
- Attorney-general Amos Wako said 1.2 billion shillings had been requested to roll out the program, but the treasury did not allocate any funds in last month's budget. Reports of threats against potential witnesses have been on the increase, with the KNCHR warning that the ICC may not succeed in its mission unless security was provided.

The Standard Website, Nairobi, in English 20 July 10

- John Kamau Mbugua, a 50-year-old pastor, was allegedly caught with bomb-making material over the weekend. The pastor pleaded not guilty in court. To a charge against him that read: "That on 17 July 2010, at 3.45pm at Karura forest in Kiambu, jointly with others not before court, without reasonable excuse had in his possession explosive materials intended to be used for purposes prejudicial to public order. The said explosives were listed as two kilos of ammonium nitrate,

- one aluminium detonator and two feet of red safety fuse.
- He spent the night in the cells after failing to raise a 500,000-shilling bond and surety of a similar amount as penalty. Police also beefed up security in his rural home amid tension over his safety. Kiambu OCPD Samuel Mukinda said they feared villagers could attack Kamau if and when he arrived home following his release on bail.
- His co-accused, Gitau and Kamau, admitted that they had the explosives, but said their intention was not to disrupt public order as alleged because they were quarry workers. Pastor Mbugua was arrested with a quarryman as he drove him to Githunguri, where he was allegedly to take him through the steps of assembling the explosives. Pastor Mbugua is suspected to be a 'No' man in the campaigns on the Proposed Constitution.

The Daily Nation Website, Nairobi, in English 19 July 10

- A group of Rift Valley Province leaders has warned former President Moi against holding a public rally at Suswa in Narok South Constituency on Wednesday to campaign against the proposed constitution. A group of politicians, led by cabinet minister William ole Ntimama, assistant minister Joseph Nkaisery and area MP Nkoidila ole Lankas, said the retired president would need the permission of elders to hold the rally in the area. The Suswa shrine is a place where the masai pray, and is sacred to that community. Outsiders cannot go there without the blessings of elders. Whenever there are critical national debates, Maasai political leaders converge at Suswa, a dusty, serene shopping centre on the Narok-Mai Mahiu road to make declarations. It also at Suswa where the Maasai initiate young morans (warriors) into community elders, usually in elaborate ceremonies that involve slaughtering of dozens of bulls, prayers and other rituals. Mr Ntimama said President Kibaki have been invited to Suswa next week "to pray with residents for the passage of a new constitution".

The Star, Nairobi, in English 19 July 10

- The government will deploy 3,000 police officers to violence hot spots in Rift Valley Province. The decision was made after circulation of leaflets, which caused tension in parts of the region worst hit by post-election violence in 2008. Police Commissioner Mathew Iteere has been in the region to assess the security situation and confirmed more officers will be deployed ahead of the referendum. Police bosses in areas considered volatile have been directed to forward the numbers of extra officers they require.
- The leaflets had been circulated in several areas including Kitale, Tinderet, Burnt Forest and parts of Kapsabet amid reports that some people, including Internally Displaced Persons, were already relocating.

The Daily Nation website, Nairobi, in English 19 July 10

- According to Daily nation investigations, there is reason to suspect that Kenyan law, security and aviation firms are "doing business with pirates" so to speak. More than 80m dollars (6.5bn shillings) is paid to Somali pirates as ransom annually, some of which is thought to pass through Kenya. Kenyan companies are acting as the link between the pirates and representatives of hijacked ship owners, facilitating ransom negotiations and payment. This pattern was confirmed by the programmes coordinator of the Seafarers Assistance Programme (SAP), Mr Andrew Mwangura, but he declined to discuss details.
- A report by the World Peace Foundation, an international think-tank bringing together scholars, diplomats, lawyers, military officers and maritime partners working on an initiative to combat piracy, claims that Kenya is among countries whose firms play a key role in driving piracy along the Somali coast.
- Money is paid to the pirates, and then transferred back to the law, security, aviation and shipping firms through a money remittance system called Hawala which is based on trust and originated in the middle east. According to US state department reports, Kenya serves as a hub for this money laundering system.