

SMSA Africa– Kenya – March 2017--Report 2

Somalia

Uhuru Kenyatta paid a surprise visit to troops in Somalia, which was well received on social media. The pictures of him with the troops were shared and liked numerous times.

Honoured today to have hosted The C-in-C HE @PresidentKE Hon @UKenyatta when he visited our soldiers in Dhobley, @amisomsomalia #ThisIsKDF (Kdfinfo, 2017)

Visited Kenyan troops in Dhobley, Somalia <http://www.president.go.ke/wp-admin/post.php?post=11005&action=edit> ... (UKenyatta, 2017)

News about KDF operations from official social media accounts has become the norm, with the occasional complaint that the MoD should not be the source on such matters, rather it should be the news media. Thus, proving that you really cannot please everyone.



<https://twitter.com/kdfinfo/status/846272111610122240>

#OpsUpdate :Our soldiers under @amisomsomalia yesterday successfully raided Al Shabaab terrorists bases in Sarira & Hola Wajeer killing 31 (Kdfinfo, 2017)

----You should not issue statements on such insignificant achievements. We should get that from the media & you verify it (Jon_koh, 2017)

Kerio Valley

Kerio Valley continued to be the epicentre of security related conversation.

TWO WOMEN dead after bandits spray police vehicle with bullets in Tiaty, Baringo County (NationBreaking, 2017)

----Thought we had boots on the ground with shoot to kill order?? (ChasiaMJ, 2016)

Initial police deployments did not seem to have any effect, in fact they may have led to an escalation in the violence. As a result, Uhuru Kenyatta ordered the deployment of the military, a move which received public support if social media is anything to go by.

Kenya Army Deployed to Quell Violence in Laikipia, Baringo...(CTNSIS, 2017)

#Kenya: 600 KDF soldiers supported by Kenya Air Force deploy to Laikipia, Samburu, Turkana, Baringo, West Pokot (VatesCorp, 2017)

Do you support the decision to deploy the military to the volatile Baringo County?
#K24WeekendEdition @richardkagoe

----its high time this viral cancer eating up every good thing in baringo should come to an end!
(petermu50027574, 2017)

---- Actually this should happen or else we keep losing young children and women in the name of Cowards..(MucheruGidi, 2017)

I had expected the response to the irregular of deployment of the military in domestic situation to be much more negative but these kind of sentiments were decidedly outnumbered.

No no i dont support kdf be deployed in baringo county and laikipia that is not the for work for kdf,it is for gsu,ap (KenolMaina, 2017)

Doesn't the president need parliament approval to deploy the military within the country?
(Kenwama, 2017)

In fact, the idea to deploy the KDF had been present in the media before President Kenyatta's decision:

Drought is causing more havoc in Laikipia, insecurity is getting out of hand by raiders. KDF be involved, here in Kenya rather than Somalia (Theomarbota, 2017)

Why not sending the KDF to Laikipia? Looks like these herders are more than a match for the local police. Stop the killings NOW! (Muirucngugi, 2017)

What are we doing in Somalia if we are dying in Laikipia? Police are scared. If they are scared what about us? - Apollos Machira. #AMLiveNTV (Ntvkenya, 2017)

The KDF it seems, elected to shoot-to-kill the livestock over the bandits. Most commentators agreed that the tactic was harsh, but differed on whether the ends justified the means.

BREAKING: KDF airstrikes leave over 500 cows dead in Laikipia (InsecurityKE, 2017)

----@alykhansatchu What? At a time when Kenya us begging for food assistance? (ShikwatiJames, 2017)

----WRONG as it is, HIT THE BANDITS WHERE IT HURTS MOST. Their treasured animals (TimothyMutua19, 2017)

----Very Good. It's high time those idiots know that those cows they are killing people for, don't mean shit to anyone (Mbate, 2017)

----They should go ahead and kill the bandits. Bandits hawana faida, ata afadhali ngombe unaweza kamua na ukule nyama [Bandits are useless, at least you can get milk and meat from the cattle] (Mbate, 2017)

----ohooohooooo what a way of taking people back to poverty. (WachiraDennis1, 2017)

----Over 100 heads of cattle shot dead by police inside Laikipia Nature Conservancy owned by Italian-born conservationist Kuki Gallmann (TYCOONEWS, 2017)

The Facebook page Pokots Countrywide provides a look into the herders' perspective. It was clear that they were very much aggrieved by the death of their cattle. Early posts reveal much less sympathy for those injured in their attacks. The caption to a photograph of a child injured during a bandit attack suggested that they did not discriminate when it came to retaliatory attacks:

Someone tell government this is the impacts of shoot to kill order and arming Tugen, Njemps and Marakwet. May peace prevail in Baringo County (Pokots Countrywide, 2017)

And when two policemen were killed during the campaign, the page administrator revelled in 'Pokot Power'. The open nature of the public page means that it is open to comments from all over and for the most part the commenters expressed outrage and anger towards the Pokot. At some point the page administrator worried that he might have to close down the page. It was clear that this person felt that his people's cause is righteous, revealing the dangers that lurk in the ideology of nationhood:

LOOMING DISASTER FOR THE PASTROLISTS IN TIATY! The president decided to deploy KDF in Tiaty. The move is UNCONSTITUTIONAL since it contravenes article 241 of the constitution of Kenya, section 3 C which states that "The Defense Forces-- (c) may be deployed to restore peace in any part of Kenya affected by unrest or instability only with the approval of the National Assembly. (The deployment has not been discussed at the parliament). The problem in Baringo has been triggered by the police themselves through violation of human rights, which includes torture and harassment of poor and defenseless mothers and children. Not forgetting the evidently biased media and the rejoicing neighbors and politicians, on every occasion something wrong happen to our people! The pastoralist appears to be at the mercy of God Himself and no one else apart from ourselves. It will be a catastrophic for our people if KDF deployment begins from Monday! God help pokot land! (Pokots Countrywide, 2017)

Updates. One Police officer shot dead in Laikipia Nature conservancy. More than 5 others sustain injuries. The officers however managed to bomb and killed another 200 Pokot cattle. Laikipia Nature conservancy tussles entered Day Two. (Pokots Countrywide, 2017)

#KDFOperationInPokotLand. Incoming. The police commandant killing pokot cattle in Kuki Gallmann's conservancy (Laikipia nature conservancy) is called kipkeu. He's Tugen from Kabartonjo. Kipkeu and his team have already bombed and killed over 500 Pokot cattle. The officers are being hosted by their colleagues at Ol Moran police station in Laikipia West. Yesterday, the officers conducted a bonfire at their Olmorani station, celebrated and ate meat of the killed Pokot animals. The officers are currently going on with their killings. Kuki Gallman is among the white settlers in Laikipia reported to have accepted the killing of cattle inside their conservancies. Other conservancies who accepted were Sosian ranch and Olmoris.

ALERT! Are you a pokot and Samburu living Laikipia North? Kindly alert our brethren that KDF and police officers will be bombing cattle and people tomorrow at Sosian Ranch (Kolson) and Olmoris Farm. Observe Vigil!!! (Pokots Countrywide, 2017)

----The same alert you should do to Tugen, Marakwet and Ijamus that they too stay alert, Pokot bandits are on the way coming to kill!! (Ronguno Wilson Arap Nario, 2017)

A Facebook post shared by Pokots Countrywide provided an insight into the socio-cultural framework that underpinned certain practices:

I am a BANDITS wife!!! I know most of you are already hating me for this, but before you judge me, please listen to my story. My name is chepocheikai i.e. our clan's name and so at home they call me that. I come from Kassaria northern part of pokot.... My husband, my bandit is ptungoin from the quiet plains of pkomo. As I told you I am a bandits wife, my husband has raided far and wide he is a pokot warrior, a hero. His father taught him like all his mates not to fear to die in line of duty i.e. kelyo tich so he went for 'marama' (searching for livestock to raid) then he went for 'setat' (the real raid) he traveled to a far land with his gun blazing fought a good fight and conquered, he came home with 'nukwurtin and ngirokamartin' for those who do not understand, this are cows with huge horns like the nyankole cows!..... He was received like a hero with vifijo and nderemo after all he was Weroo Apaa koreng the great!. He is now free to marry one or two more women(but it will be a bit hard for him because..... I the daughter of Lalwa suom will not allow it) nitamu muuuuu.....uuudd...er (shaniqua style). I know you are asking yourself how did this raid start, it started when my bandit was enrolled at the prestigious maseno school. for four years fought with academic giants and won the battle, and joined UON then got first class honors... To enable him get a scholarship to the prestigious Oxford university (the only thing I knew about oxford was a dictionary and a geometrical set lol) this is where he got his nukwurtin and ngirokamartin i.e. his masters and PHD in synthetic chemistry. His gun was his brain, his books and his pen and maybe a Bunsen burner(that's the only thing I rem about chemistry, Mimi na johohatukushindania mbali kwa chemistry). So my point is I am a proud wife of a pokot bandit, a bandit of education a bandit of development. And ooh yes he like the warriors who returned from setat paid my bride price in full 25 cows and 30 goats because i am my father's daughter.....! I am proud of all pokot men who have risen above this madness of banditry of bad politics that has kept us behind. Let us show the world that education will be our only tokodow and asilinyang (names of AK47 and G3). Proud of my pokot bandit Dr. Ptoton, and many other bandits like Nobert Tomtom N. Poghisio, Linus Limatiang, Claudio Mnangat Sortum, Dr. Philip Parklea, Dr. Atudonyang, Victor Kanyi, Lenny Poghisio, Jeremiah Poghon, fr Abraham Sireu and many others. #peacemy people

The role of inflammatory speech in this situation makes one about the scope and value of the NCIC 'hate speech' legislation that was put in place after the 2007/2008 post-election violence. President Kenyatta issued a message against hate speech and suggested that the

responsibility for checking such speech lay with the ‘disciplined forces’. The fact that some of his audience implied that he himself had participated in hate speech when he had disparaged political adversaries indicates that there was a lack of clarity about what constituted hate speech. Particularly given the affinity that many groups have for their leaders, when an insult to a person is taken as a personal affront by the entire community that may lead to violence, how does/should the law deal with that?

We must be vigilant to keep the sparks of reckless rhetoric—of hate speech and idle talk—from evolving into fires of political violence (UKenyatta, 2017)

----what the hell. its the president and his deputy who are reckless with their words and he is here lecturing us on recklessness (Brian_Bwana, 2017)

----hapo umetucheat [There, you have lied to us] (FidelAllah, 2017)

That is a burden we all bear, but it weighs especially heavy on our disciplined forces (UKenyatta, 2017)

A local NGO placed the burden, not on the ‘disciplined forces’ but on the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, a position that a prosecutor from the ODPP vehemently countered:

The office of the @ODPP_KE is the weakest link in the institutions meant to enforce laws on hate and inciteful speech #NCICCoheionMonitors (lpgjustice, 2017)

----The assertion is not based on empirical basis on @ODPP_KE role as relates to failures in the entire justice chain. @matundura78 (Kattoloo, 2016)

----@kattoloo Could @ODPP_KE provide the empirical evidence on the number of convictions vs acquittals it has had on hate speech @matundura78 (lpgjustice, 2017)

----This is a classic case of flogging the wrong tree. Investigate #hatespeech well & @ODPP_KE will get you convictions. @NCIC_Kenya (Kattoloo, 2017)

----Classic case of pot calling kettle black? Isn't it for courts to convict, on evid. proffered, rather than @ODPP_KE? @lpgjustice (Braga_vance, 2017)

Keriako Tobiko, Kenya's @ODPP_KE must come up with a framework for speedy arrest and prosecution on incitement & hate #NCICCoheionMonitors (lpgjustice, 2017)

----For the record @ODPP_KE has a #hatespeech Prosecution Section with well-trained Counsel & set standards. @matundura78 @mkamau07 (Kattoloo, 2017)

----@kattoloo Commendable @ODPP_KE has the hatespeech prosecution Sctn. It seems though to be a dog without a bite. @matundura78 @mkamau07 (lpgjustice, 2017)

As Kenya proceeds towards the election, developing mechanisms that prevent leaders from using their influence to instigate violence becomes more important. In the same vein, leaders often cater to their constituencies in the lead up to elections; a long term question is how to

empower leaders to resist having to pander to the worst tendencies in the community. This seems to be a question plaguing democracies the world over.

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