



**WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES
FOR LASTING PEACE**

PEACE BUILDING PROFILE

Fostering Peace among the affected communities

**EUNICE CHEBET
THE PEACE MAKER**

SECOND EDITION

Chebet the Peace Maker

Kenya went to elections in 2007 to elect their president and representative in parliament and civic leaders. Unlike the previous elections held in the country, the 2007 election was closely contested between the Party of National Unity (PNU) and the Orange Democratic movement (ODM). When the results were finally announced there was sudden reaction from the citizens across the country which led to outspread violence in most parts of the country. Communities turned against communities. Some of the hardest hit areas were almost the entire Riftvalley and the borders of other provinces.



This created animosity amongst communities that had cohabited well with their neighbours peacefully for along time although there had been small conflicts amongst the tribes within the country. The country became polarized on tribes' lines. In most parts of the country many people lost their loved ones, property worth millions of shillings was destroyed and many more were displaced.

In order to bring this communities together Eunice Chebet who works in the Office of the President, Ministry of Special Programmes, head of Inter-communal Peace Initiatives as the Coordinator has traveled across the country preaching peace to Kenyans. She has worked with the political leaders, religious leaders, community elders and the local administration and the people affected by the violence to rebuild their homes and lives.

Chebet has been moving around Riftvalley province one of the most hit part by the post election violence and she has preached peace to all the people in local gatherings, in the churches and in the villages calling tribes to forgive each other and stay peaceful. In her quest to preach peace and reconciliation, she uses various methods which include among others organizing Public meetings, uniting community elders, calling repentance meetings after mobilizing them from the village level, forming peace committees including the affected people to present their views, inter-communal football matches where she invites guests from both sides and preach peace.

In the entire country Chebet with the cooperation of religious leaders organized the inter-religious prayers which saw many people return property and goods which they had stolen from the post election violence victims.

Some of the people repented and brought the weapons they used in the violence which included guns, spears, bows and poisoned arrows. pangas and other crude weapons including billions of holds they looted from homes and shops where sundered to their owners and asked for forgiveness and welcomed them to stay peaceful. In the borders of Nyanza Province and Riftvalley people lost their loved ones, animals, property among other belongings. Chebet consoled with the families who lost their loved ones and encouraged them to seek God's guidance and maintain peace with their neighbours.

Though the post election violence created dents that cannot be mended in some families who lost their loved ones, Chebet is determined to see to it that the communities co-exist peacefully and what transpired in 2008 does not happen again in the future.

Eunice Chebet

Inter-communal Peace Initiative Co-ordinator in the Office of the President

PROVINCIAL



MPS DEMANDS ANSWERS ON US\$1 BN FOR YOUTH
MPs yesterday demanded answers on Sh1.6 billion set aside by the US for youth in Kenya. P.40

POST-ELECTION STRIFE | One woman's crusade to persuade communities to surrender weapons makes a big impact

Peace drive in violence-hit areas yields calm

Tranquillity returns to the most affected areas as neighbours cast aside their suspicions

BY GEORGE SAYAGIE
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A one-woman crusade to restore peace in the Rift Valley and other areas that bore the brunt of the post-election violence is paying dividends.

Ms Eunice Chebet, the Inter-Communal Peace Initiative coordinator in the Ministry of Special Programmes, has succeeded in persuading Kenyans to surrender weapons they used to kill each other following presidential election results in 2007.

Two years into the initiative, Ms Chebet has received five million bows and arrows, 7,000 pangas and 54 home-made guns.

She says most of the weapons were in the hands of Rift Valley and Nyanza residents, the two provinces worst affected by the violence.

The weapons were surrendered in Molo, Timboroa, Eldoret, Koibatek, Mt Elgon, Kericho, Borabu, Naivasha, Narok and Kipkelion districts.

Ms Chebet's team also visited Kuresoi, Njoro, Maai Mahiu, Nakuru, Kitale, Lugari and Kisumu.

Escorted by security personnel, she went to all the violence hotspots, educating communities on the effects of negative ethnicity.

Many listened to her call and surrendered their weapons, she said.

Speaking at a peace meeting in Molo where she received 3,000 bows and arrows, 100 machetes, two home-made guns and household goods, Ms Chebet said her mandate is to restore peace in affected areas and educate communities to avoid a repeat of the violence in future polls. She said with



Ms Eunice Chebet, the Inter-Communal Peace Initiative coordinator in the Ministry of Special Programmes, inspects the weapons, including 3,000 bows and arrows, that were surrendered by residents in Molo.

the help of elders, religious leaders and the Provincial Administration, her initiative was bearing fruit as permanent peace has been achieved in areas like Molo, Kuresoi, Kipkelion and Timboroa.

"Host communities and their neighbours are on talking terms, they take part in economic activities together and share churches and schools unlike immediately after the chaos," she said.

"Many people have owned up and revealed details of their victims, which will help us ensure the property surrendered is returned to its rightful owners," Ms Chebet said.

The weapons, she said, will be stored until a special ceremony to destroy them is organised.

"Other items recovered including

household goods worth millions of shillings and 200 head of cattle will be kept in a central store in the areas where they were surrendered. We will then work out a way for the owners to retrieve their property," she said.

Ms Chebet said the livestock would be given to IDPs if the owners could not be traced. She said a government

amnesty for those still holding on to their weapons or stolen property was still in force and urged them to surrender these to the Provincial Administration.

She, however, said a major challenge was the reluctance by some communities to accept IDPs in their midst.

Ms Chebet also complained that the formation of counties under the new Constitution seemed to have triggered a new ethnicity wave, saying this would be setback to her initiative.

"Communities in various parts of the country are already laying claim to counties, saying they belong to them. This includes the cosmopolitan Nakuru county, to which every community is laying claim," she said.

To counter this, she urged the gov-

THE NUMBERS

What the conflict cost the country

1,133

The number of people killed in the violence following poll

650,000

The number of Kenyans uprooted from their homes in the mayhem

200

The number of cattle stolen during the chaos that have not been claimed

ernment to allocate resources for her department to conduct civic education on the need for coexistence.

The 2007-2008 violence was the worst political unrest since Independence in Kenya and cost the country 1,133 lives.

Property worth billions of shillings was destroyed and 650,000 people uprooted from their homes and forced into camps.

The extent of the violence forced the government, through the Special Programmes ministry, to conduct a national peace operation aimed at restoring order.

Through the operation, Kenyans were persuaded to voluntarily surrender the weapons they used to kill and maim each other.

Additional reporting by Lucas Barasa

DAILY NATION
Wednesday December 2, 2009

DEADLY ARSENAL



YES, IT HAPPENED: Ms Eunice Chebet of the Ministry of State for Special Programmes inspects bows and arrows recovered after the 2007 post-election violence in Nakuru

District. The weapons were among other properties displayed outside the district headquarters, attracting a lot of attention from the public. Photo/JOSEPH KIHERRI



The cause of intercommunal and political conflict in Kenya during the 2007 Post Election Violence whereby property worth billions of shillings was destroyed, death and 650,000 uprooted from their homes and forced into camps.



Inter-communal Peace Initiative Co-ordinator in the Office of the President, Eunice Chebet has been moving around the country to organize public meetings to get views from the affected communities and call for repentance meetings to bring them together.

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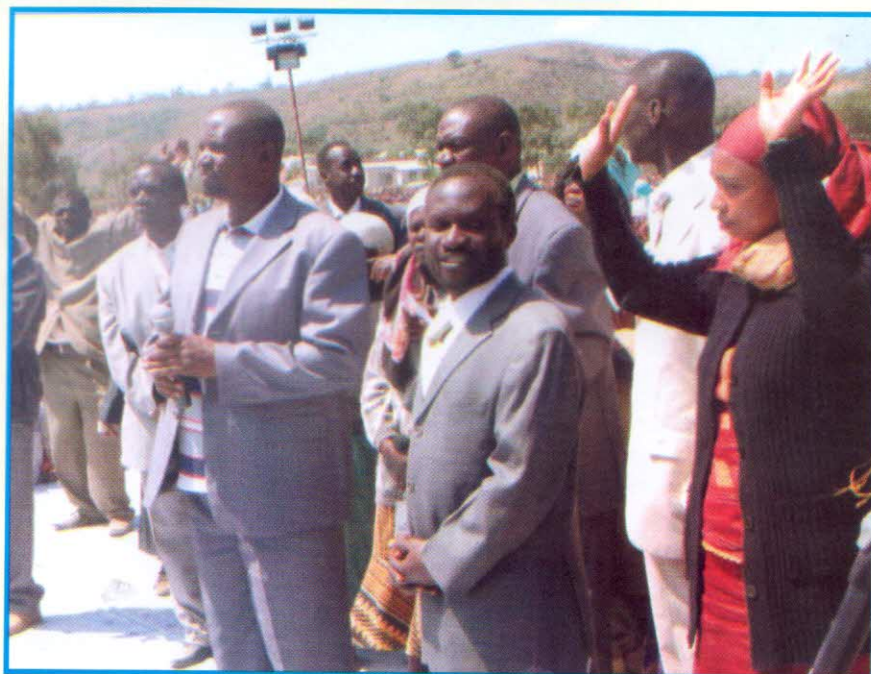


She used different methods of preaching peace and reconciliation, uniting elders, repentance in Churches, forming peace committees among the affected communities to give their views, Inter-communal games where she invites guests from both sides and preach peace.





Eunice Chebet Preaching reconciliation around the provinces most hit by Post Election Violence by calling local gatherings, in Churches, and in the villages calling tribes to forgive each other and stay peaceful.





She is escorted by security personnel around the country receiving and inspecting ammunitions and crude weapons surrendered by communities after her call for repentance.





Chebet received millions of crude poisoned weapons used during post election violence, which she handed over to the security personnel. This being a sign of true repentance among the communities in Kenya.





She is inspecting surrendered weapons which shocked people in the country. Many people were touched by her efforts of bringing repentance among the fighting communities and political squabbles in the country.





Eunice Chebet receiving poisoned weapons from the public on her peace mission. Which she hands over to the local Government security personnel (poisoned arrows and spears).



Inter-Communal Peace Initiatives Co-ordinator (Eunice Chebet) moving in villages to assist communities surrender fighting weapons and items they might have looted during Post Election Violence to maintain peace among themselves.

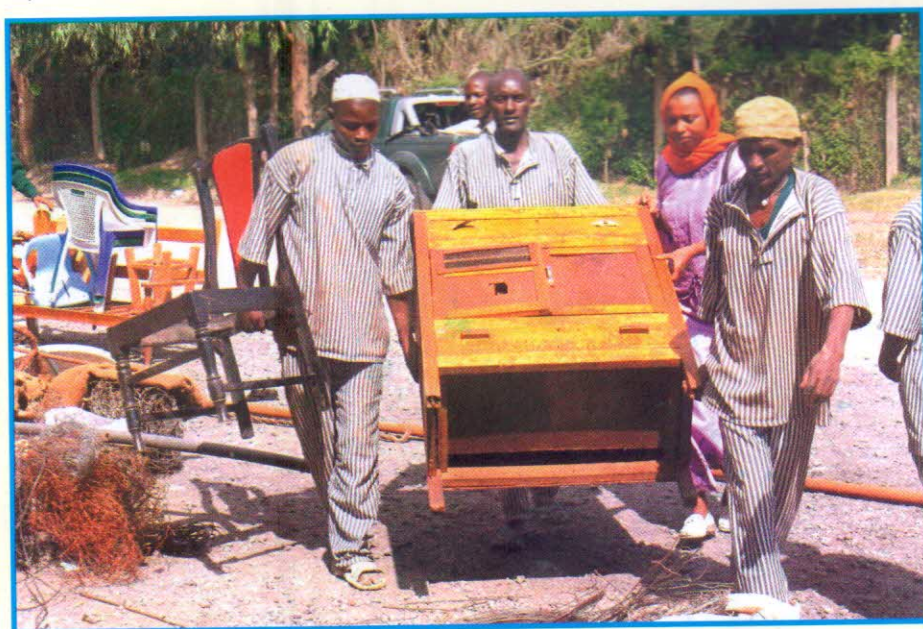
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Eunice assisting communities to surrender peacefully. She urged the police to join them.





Eunice Chebet assisting communities to surrender weapons and looted household goods in different regions in Kenya.





Eunice Chebet welcoming political leaders for unity.



Eunice Chebet holding elders' meeting to get their views and resettle their differences.





Eunice Chebet welcomed and escorted by community members to address a peace rally in different occasions.

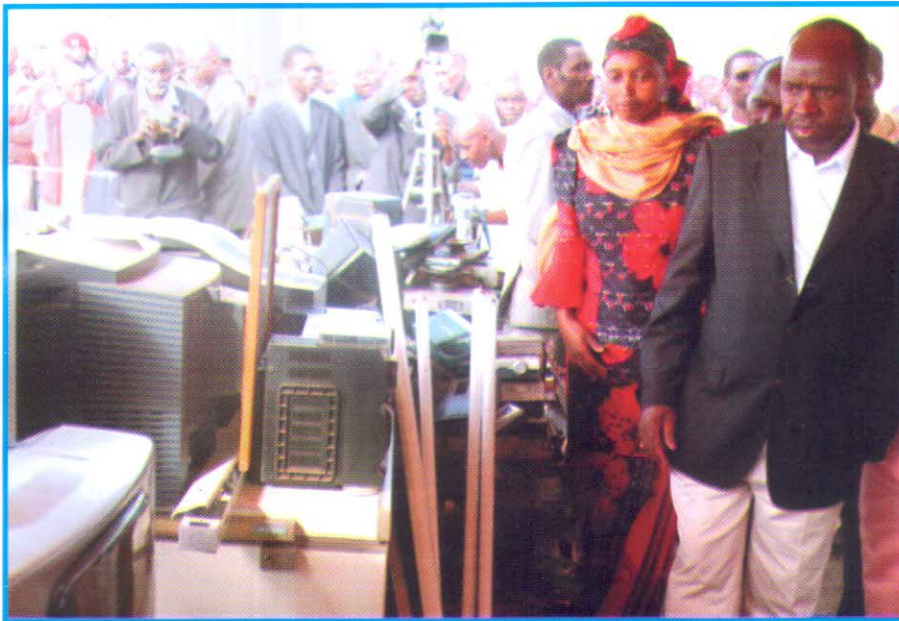






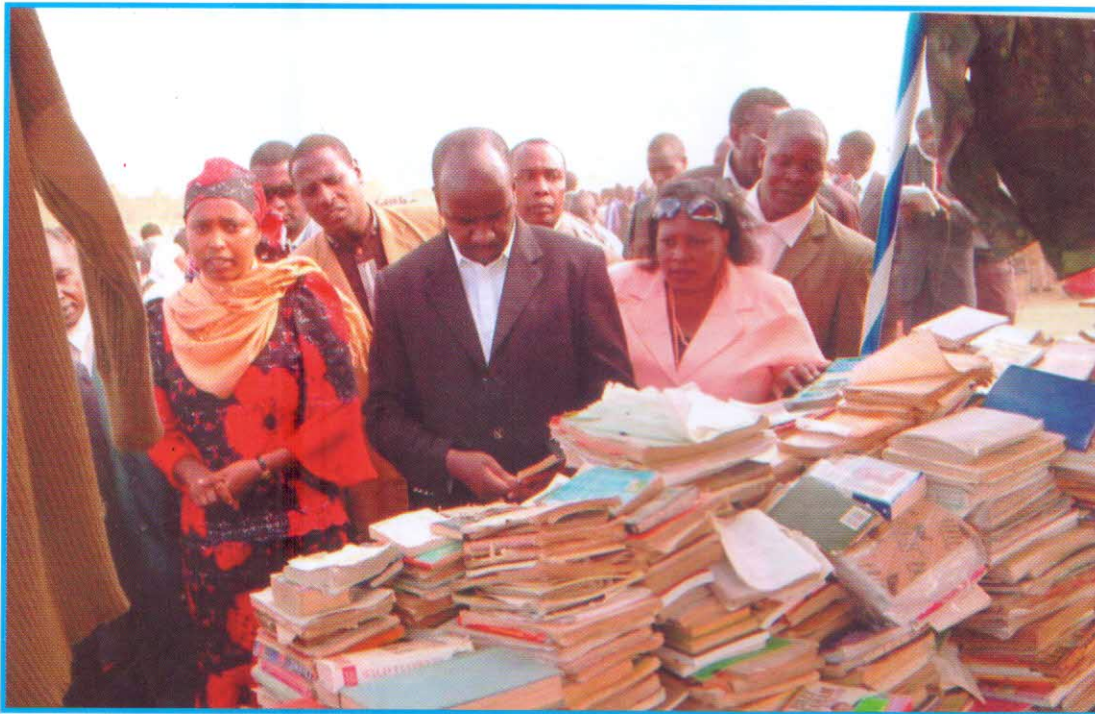
Eunice Chebet with the internally displaced women and children. She visited all the camps to ensure their safety.





Millions of Crude weapons and household goods surrendered in different repentance meetings organized by Inter-Communal Peace Initiatives Co-ordinator (Eunice Chebet) country wide (showing the government officials and residents).



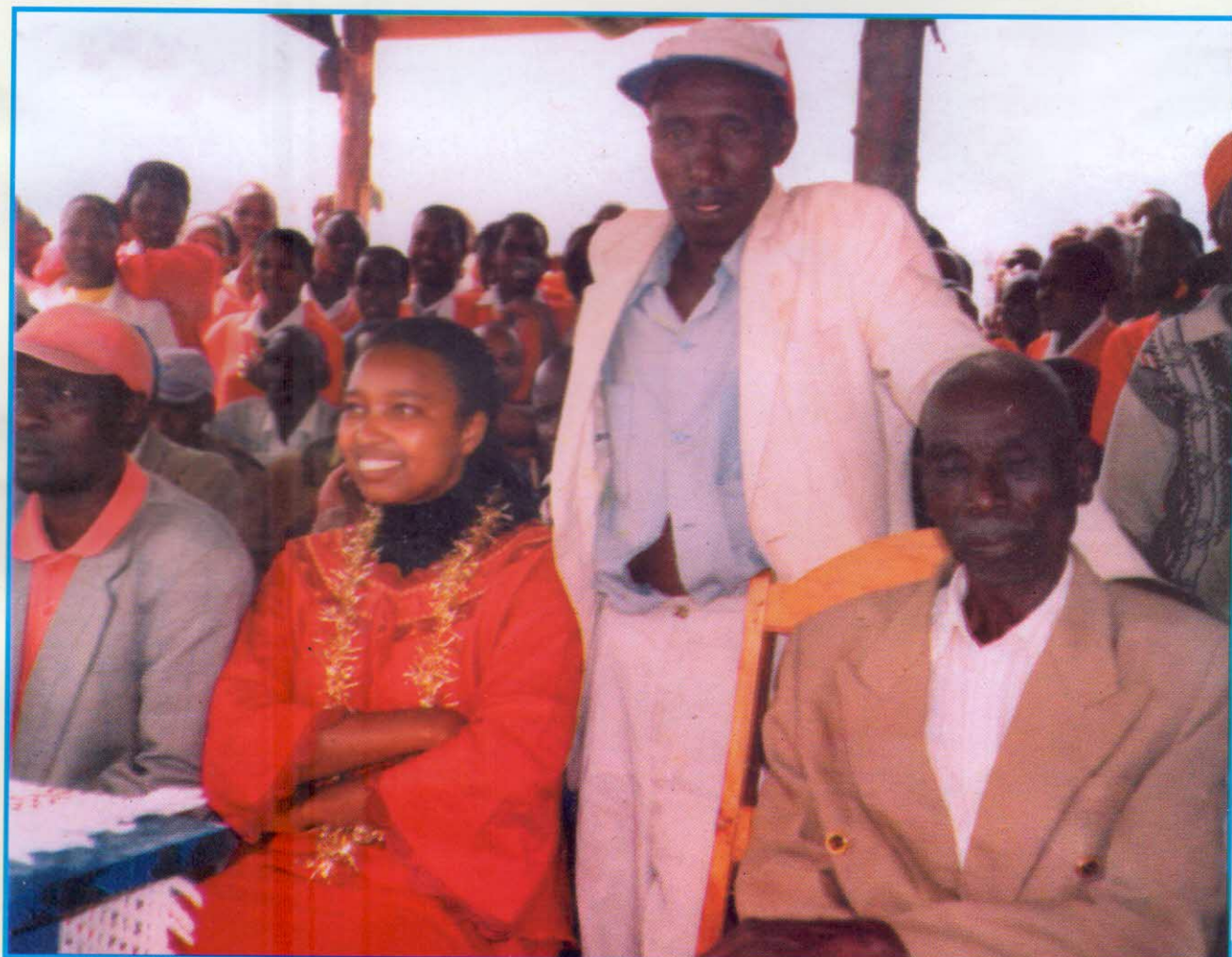


Thousands of different items surrendered.





Eunice Chebet given an award by her community elders for championing reconciliation in Kenya.





Eunice Chebet
briefing the citizens
through the media
on achievements,
cautions and need
for peace in the
country.





PEACE INITIATIVES (submitted by Eunice Chebet)

Problem identified

- Peace was not fully realized; communities were living in fear and suspicious. It took a lot of efforts to restore harmony.
- Rift-valley: - These are areas predominantly occupied by all tribes majority being Kalenjins, Kikuyus, Kisiis and Luos. They have endemic conflicts over livestock thefts, farm thefts, land allocation disputes and political differences. All these factors make it difficult to reconcile the communities. However additional resources are needed to provide civic education, peace, healing and reconciliation. It is important to bring politicians together.
- Ethnicity is very strong amongst them. One tribe would wish to support themselves in political possibilities while the other do vice-versa. This complicates peace process.

Intervention and achievement so far

Through the peace initiatives which is being organized and conducted by Inter-communal Peace Initiatives Co-ordinator in the Office of the President Eunice Chebet, by use of all groups in repentance and forgiveness meetings countrywide, many people have turned up to repent and surrendered things they looted during post-election violence and weapons used. This is the biggest sign ever that they have opted for a national healing through repentance. It has brought co-existence amongst the communities.

Surrendered things were thousands and millions of crude weapons, all kinds of items looted and ammunitions

- Poisoned arrows, arrow heads
- spears, pangas, knives, runkus and machetes
- Households
- Livestock
- And many other

For further information refer the DVDs

Ability to sustain co-existence (Opportunity)

- Monitoring and Evaluation (Peace building and dialogue)
- Political resettlement
- Mobilize for additional resources
- Humanitarian assistance
- Increase of frequent and constant peace and repentance meetings
- Inter-community social activities
- Increase peace building and reconciliations efforts

Recommendations

- Political reconciliation between political parties
- There is need for serious government intervention
- The remaining Internally Displaced Persons in the camps need quick solutions resettlement
- Additional resources should be given to Internally Displaced Persons who have been settled medicine, healthcare and social services.
- The humanitarian fund should be properly used to address the remaining issues of Internally Displaced Persons.
- Effective measures be put in place to address immorality; HIV AIDS.



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