

## **KENYANS FOR PEACE WITH TRUTH AND JUSTICE (KPTJ)**

### **PRESS STATEMENT ON THE MPEKETONI ATTACKS AND THE DETERIORATING STATE OF SECURITY IN KENYA.**

Kenyans for Peace with Truth and Justice (KPTJ) would like to express our condolences to the families and friends of the innocent Kenyans murdered during the recent attacks in Mpeketoni in Lamu County. We also wish those who were injured a quick recovery. We condemn the attacks. We affirm the right to life, which the victims have been denied.

KPTJ condemns terrorism as dehumanizing not just the victims, but also the perpetrators. We share the country's outrage, fear and helplessness in the wake of the series of terrorist attacks of which the one at Mpeketoni is only the latest. Terrorism must be brought to an end. So too must generalized insecurity, evidenced by on-going violence in Baringo, Wajir, Mandera, Garissa and Marsabit—the last from where 53,000 Kenyans have been displaced between November 2013 and February 2014. Violence has also taken place during the past year, in Bungoma, Busia and Kitui. Violent crime lies behind the surfacing of mass graves in Kitengela recently, which remains unexplained. The slaying in Mombasa of several Muslim clerics, including Sheikh Idris, an icon of religious tolerance, has also not been explained.

These cases of insecurity, violence, violent crime and murders should be treated with the same seriousness as Mpeketoni. The government's response should be thorough and intelligence-led, not predicated on ethnic or religious profiling, as with the roundup and detention of the Somali community. Ethnic or religious profiling is both discriminatory and counter-productive and must never be condoned or carried out by the state.

KPTJ is concerned that, in all the above situations of breach of Kenyans' security, there has been little if any action to establish accountability for those behind that breach.

In relation to the Mpeketoni attacks, the government has promised investigations. But the government has, after each of the previous incidents, promised investigations with no follow-up. We therefore fear that, as before, nothing will follow the promise of investigations into the Mpeketoni attacks.

This is particularly so as - KPTJ notes with concern- the government has jumped to conclusions by blaming the political opposition for the Mpeketoni attacks without tabling any evidence to that effect, or substantiating its allegations. In a polarised country such as ours, such conduct is irresponsible at best and dangerous at worst. It politicises and trivialises security concerns and

turns Kenyans against one other instead of uniting them. It has already led to calls from one criminal gang and political militia for 'community defense' on ethnic grounds.

Security is unlikely to improve unless underlying problems of cohesion of Kenyan society are addressed. We note calls by the political opposition for national dialogue on security and other concerns and the government's position that it does not welcome such national dialogue and will instead work within state institutions to address these concerns.

The government has the duty to represent the public good. The political opposition has a legitimate place in the constitutional order of the country to raise security and other concerns using a multiplicity of lawful channels, both in and out of state institutions. We therefore encourage the government and the political opposition to work together in good faith. The more inclusive the channels for discussing security and other concerns, the more likely we are to find lasting solutions. For this reason, we support the political opposition's calls for inclusive national dialogue. We pledge the readiness of Kenyan civil society to assist both the government and the political opposition to bridge the divide that currently separates them for the common good of all Kenyans.

We call for:

1. The immediate and thorough review of the country's top security establishment which has clearly failed in the government's core mandate of guaranteeing the constitutional right to security for all Kenyans. In particular, we call for the resignation or sacking of the Interior Cabinet Secretary Joseph Ole Lenku and other top security personnel who must take responsibility for multiple failures that led to the Mpeketoni attack and other attacks that have led to loss of life and property throughout the country;
2. All cases of insecurity, violence, violent crime and murders, including this most recent case of Mpeketoni, to be treated with the same seriousness;
3. The government's response to be lawful and thorough, through intelligence-led investigations, not predicated on ethnic or religious profiling;
4. The Director of Public Prosecutions to prosecute any individual, criminal gang or political militia inciting any ethnic community to take the law into its own hands;
5. Inclusive national dialogue on Kenya's lack of cohesion, security and other concerns.

End/kptj/20.06.2014