

Thursday, 24 January 2008

Dear Friends and All,

I do hope and pray that things with you are peaceful and that you are experiencing the blessings of Father God.

I felt I should write a further email update just to keep you informed of the situation here. As I sit composing this, mid afternoon, with quite a thin cloud cover, gentle breeze and a lower temp of around 28oC (82oF) all is quiet and peaceful in the area. Caleb, our Manager, is currently in town, and I believe as with yesterday and the previous few days there are no road blocks, rioting etc. Probably as with yesterday there will be a notable police, especially G.S.U. (General Service Unit - a more heavily armed, highly trained group, some would say group of killers) presence in the town, even walking around the main supermarkets. One difficult incident, though I feel this was the action of a lone young 'thug', occurred yesterday when Caleb and I were driving into town, this young man on a fairly isolated bit of road blocked our passage threatening us with a catapult coming up to me on my side of the car demanding money. We had to stop, we refused his demands and drove off slowly and then reported this incident to a

group of friends standing by roadside some 200km further along for them to sort out.

One very worrying matter is that in Nakumatt yesterday, our major supermarket, equivalent to Tesco's, one of my friends who works there told me that the food stuff I could see was all they had and that their storehouse was now empty. The problem for them being that they are not receiving, due to the insecurity on the roads, any supplies from Nairobi. Sadly this leads to some 'panic' buying I being one that said we should get our major household shopping in now ready for next month. The ultimate consequence of this is that food etc prices have risen sharply and thus our household expenditure has gone up.

Road transport between Kisumu and Nairobi and many other destinations is a real problem still with blockages, burnt out vehicles, barricades etc. Police have been trying to organize police protected convoys in places but of course this can only satisfy a small percentage of normal volume of traffic. Also remember that the problems since the violence started is additional to the pathetic road conditions that exists for the vast majority of the journey between Nairobi and Kisumu. One sign of the road problem is that Kisumu is now being served by a further two passenger air carriers, making six in all. These each fly twice daily between Nairobi and Kisumu.

Economically the country is facing a major downturn, currently the Kenya Shilling value has, and is, falling sharply. Tourism, one of Kenya's major sources of income has all but stopped apparently with many hotels on the coast having been forced to close and thousands of staff laid off. Two German tourists interviewed on T.V. last week said they had defied their government's advice against travel to Kenya, but had been forced to come without any travel insurance.

Most schools have remained closed and at this time all our youngsters in primary and secondary schools are at home. There are some signs that schools will reopen next week. I guess this will depend upon the general situation in the country and whether or not Kofi Annan and team have managed to make any progress in their mediation attempts between President (Mr.) Kibaki and Raila Odinga.

I had been thinking of returning to U.K. a little earlier than my planned dates but for several reasons I have left things as they were with a return date of Feb 14th. There are still quite a lot of things for me to sort out here, and also Expedia with whom my flights were booked were not the most helpful.

With so much gratitude for all your interest and care.

Yours,

Terry N