

WESTERN KENYA LIFE IN A LEGAL VACUUM

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In December 2007, violence broke out throughout Kenya in response to alleged fraud in a heavily disputed presidential election between candidates Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga. The violence and rallies were particularly intense in Odinga's homeland in Western Kenya. More than a thousand people were killed in the rampage, and hundreds of thousands were displaced in the confusion and bloodshed. Police brutality was a particularly important factor in the turmoil, and many of the protestors were shot dead in the back by Kenyan police officers. The disorder and chaos of the post-election violence left many victims in a legal vacuum. These photographs follow the freeze of the Kenyan legal system near Odinga's home area in the wake of the violence. The people in this essay are the casualties of injustices and individuals looking for innovative solutions to human rights.

1 . KIBOS, KENYA
A Kenyan prison officer sits amid piles of
hand-written appeals that he types.





2 . KIBOS, KENYA

Most of the hundreds of appeals for the prison go through this one typewriter. The appeal process was paralyzed at this prison when the typewriter in the back broke down.



3 . KIBOS, KENYA

To Americans, this prison would seem frozen in a film noir movie set from the 1940s.



4 . KIBOS, KENYA

Courtyard inside the prison works area, where prisoners learn woodworking and sewing to produce materials for the government.



5 . KIBOS, KENYA

A young Somali boy studies in a privately run *madrasa* at Kakuma Refugee Camp. No full-time judges for this refugee warehouse are available, and some refugee communities have set up their own jail cells to take justice into their own hands.



6 . KIBOS, KENYA
Young boys play soccer in the almost completely abandoned courthouse in Kakuma Refugee Camp.



7. OYUGIS, KENYA

A sign outside the Oyugis courthouse reads, “Don’t Give a Bribe.” Similar posters and signs detail how to fight police corruption and explain rights in the justice process in all prisons and courthouses. Inside, Advocate Peter Onyango with Christian Legal Education Aid and Research waits to hear a child defilement case he is aiding. The defendant’s lawyer did not make it to court for the second time in a row. It may be months before the case is actually heard in front of a magistrate.



8. OYUGIS, KENYA

Advocate Peter Onyango, with Christian Legal Education Aid and Research, sleeps on his way to the courthouse. Time and resources are wasted in the justice system because of delayed trials and insufficient numbers of local advocates.

9. AHERO, KENYA
Post-election violence ripped apart much of Western Kenya. For many weeks, it was unsafe to go outside to even get groceries. Many businesses were destroyed during the riots because of the political and tribal affiliations of owners.





10 . KISUMU, KENYA

Young street boys stand around a trash fire at the bus stage. The day before, many of the street kids in Kisumu were temporarily thrown in jail to paint a happier picture of the city for the first visit of Mwai Kibaki since the post-election violence.



11 . KISUMU, KENYA

A homeless child sleeps next to a trash fire at the bus stage. Children and young men work around the bus and van parking lot loading buses and cleaning.



12 . KISUMU, KENYA
Birds fly through the sky outside the office of Christian
Legal Education Aid and Research as a storm approaches.