

Statement on Recent Events in the Republic of Kenya

The Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA) is a pan-Commonwealth professional association of lawyers dedicated to maintain and promote the rule of law throughout the Commonwealth.

The CLA is gravely concerned by the current state of civil unrest in the Republic of Kenya following the announcement by the Electoral Commission of the result of elections that were held on 27 December 2007.

The CLA notes with alarm the continuing failure to resolve the issue of the disputed elections, the limitations imposed by the Government on freedom of lawful association and freedom of information, together with the consequent humanitarian crisis causing displacement of persons, serious injury and loss of life.

The CLA notes that the Law Society of Kenya (LSK) has condemned alleged illegalities in the electoral process and called upon the Government to hold fresh elections. The LSK has also condemned the current violence and limitations imposed by the Government on freedom of association and information.

The LSK is an institutional member of the CLA and hosted the 15th Commonwealth Law Conference in Nairobi in September 2007.

By virtue of its membership of the Commonwealth, the Republic of Kenya is committed to the shared fundamental values and principles of the Commonwealth, at the core of which is a shared belief in, and adherence to, democratic principles including respect for the rule of law in accordance with the principles contained in the Harare Declaration and the Millbrook Action Programme.

The CLA appeals to the Government of the Republic of Kenya, as a matter of urgency, to resolve the issues relating to the disputed elections in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Kenya and to bring an end to the current violence.

Ron Heinrich
President - Commonwealth Lawyers' Association
24 January 2008