

# Kenya opposition calls for fresh vote

President open to unity govt: Tutu

AP, AFP, Nairobi

Kenya's opposition party called for a new presidential election to settle a dispute over the vote that has sparked days of deadly riots, and police hurled tear gas to scatter more than 1,000 protesters in the coastal city of Mombasa yesterday.

There was no immediate comment on the call for a new vote from the government of President Mwai Kibaki, who is unlikely to accept such a demand.

The US and Europe were among those pushing for reconciliation, but said a "made-in-Kenya solution" is needed to end the violence

that has killed 300 people and displaced 100,000 in what was once lauded as among the most stable democracies in Africa.

The upheaval has spread from the capital to the coast and the western highlands. In Mombasa, a city heavily dependent on tourism, police scattered 1,500 protesters who were shouting "Kibaki has stolen our vote!" There were no immediate reports of injuries.

In Nairobi, supporters of opposition candidate Raila Odinga vowed that street protests that shook Nairobi a day earlier would continue Friday, but by midday there were no signs of a mass protest brewing. Small groups of protesters

were gathering on street corners in the slums, though, saying they were preparing for a rally.

International observers say ballot counting after the Dec. 27 vote that returned Kibaki to power was flawed.

Anyang Nyong'o, secretary-general of Odinga's Orange Democratic Movement, said the country should ready "for a new election of the president." With the call, the opposition appeared to leave little room for compromise with Kibaki, leaving the political deadlock to grind on.

"This is about a democracy and justice," Nyong'o said. "We shall continue to defend and promote the

right of Kenyans so that the democratic process should be fulfilled."

Meanwhile South African Nobel peace laureate Desmond Tutu on Friday said President Mwai Kibaki was open to a coalition government with his opposition foes in a bid to break the political deadlock.

"There is a great deal of hope since both the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and government have indicated they are open to negotiations," the cleric told reporters after talks with Kibaki.

"The president was not averse to the formation of coalitions -- but clearly there has to be an acceptance that there is a governing authority in the country," Tutu said.

## N Korea still hopes for nuclear deal

AP, Seoul

North Korea said Friday the country still hopes for a smooth implementation of an aid-for-disarmament deal with the United States and other countries, after failing to meet a year-end deadline to declare its nuclear programmes.

The statement, carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency, was the first official North Korean reaction to the missed deadline.

The North's Foreign Ministry claimed that the country drew up a list of its nuclear programs in November, and informed the United States of its contents.

It also claimed that Pyongyang offered explanation to the United States regarding suspicions about its alleged uranium enrichment programme and nuclear cooperation with Syria.



Democratic presidential hopeful and Illinois Senator Barack Obama stands on stage with his wife Michelle and their daughters Sasha and Malia during his caucus night rally at Hy-Vee Hall in Des Moines, Iowa on Thursday. Obama surged to a stunning victory in the first 2008 White House nominating contest on Thursday, dealing a severe blow to Hillary Clinton's bid to be America's first woman president.

PHOTO: AFP

## What do the Iowa results mean?

BBC ONLINE

US presidential hopefuls are digesting the outcome of the first contest of the 2008 election race.

It was celebrations for Mike Huckabee and Barack Obama, who won the Republican and Democratic nominations respectively, as voters in Iowa turned out in force to make their selection.

The Iowa caucuses can give big boosts to candidates' campaigns in the long haul to reach the White House.

What were the key factors in the results? For Barack Obama, one of the key words was "change".

It cropped up regularly in Obama's campaign speeches. And about half of the people attending the Democratic caucuses said a candidate's ability to bring change was the most important factor.

For Huckabee, the key word was "values", with many Republican caucus-goers saying the former Baptist minister was someone "who shares my values".

What about the turnout? This was also another important factor.

The Republican turnout was about 115,000, up on the 2000 figure of 87,666. For the Democrats it was even higher, with some 239,000 turning out to register their choice, up from 124,000 four years ago.

This seems to reflect Obama's

success in reaching out to first-time caucus-goers and independents.

Who were the biggest losers? Without doubt the most glaring loss was for Senator Hillary Clinton, long considered the Democratic frontrunner and who once enjoyed a significant lead in the Iowa polls.

On the Republican side, former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney saw the many millions of dollars he spent campaigning in Iowa translate only into second place.

What about the other candidates?

John Edwards, who also campaigned on a theme of a break with the status quo, will be hoping his strong finish to secure second place in Iowa, ahead of Hillary Clinton, will boost his campaign.

Republican Senator John McCain, who came fourth behind Huckabee, Romney and Fred Thompson, spent little time in Iowa and has been much more focused on the next election stop of New Hampshire.

Are any campaign changes likely?

Hillary Clinton and Romney have the funds, the organisational backing and plenty of supporters. But it is clear they have both been wounded politically and need to regroup fast.

Hillary Clinton has long had to negotiate the line between presenting herself as an experienced pair of hands but also the right person to take over from George W Bush in the

White House.

It may be telling that as she recognised Obama's win, Hillary Clinton said: "We're sending a clear message that we are going to have to change and that change will be a Democratic president in the White House in 2009."

What happens next? The nomination battle is set to intensify further, with only a few days for the respective campaigns to gear up for New Hampshire's primary on Tuesday.

Polling data from there has indicated that Hillary Clinton's once-secure lead has been dented and it is virtually neck-and-neck between her and Obama. While not necessarily fatal, a defeat in New Hampshire would be a bitter blow to her campaign.

The polls for the Republicans show a much more open contest. McCain, who has devoted much more time to campaigning in New Hampshire than Iowa, is doing well, surveys suggest.

New Hampshire polls put Romney and McCain at a tougher test.

Huckabee will face a tougher test in this state where issues like taxation and national security are set to figure more prominently than in Iowa, where social and religious issues came to the fore.

He will be aiming to use his Iowa victory to boost his chances in New Hampshire, where he cannot count on the same level of Christian conservative support.



Visiting Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki (R) offers prayers for slain former premier Benazir Bhutto at the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) office in Islamabad yesterday. A British police team flew into Pakistan to help probe the killing of Benazir Bhutto after President Pervez Musharraf admitted he was unhappy with his country's handling of the investigation.

## Thai vote winners face probe on Thaksin links

AFP, Bangkok

Thailand's Supreme Court has agreed to consider a case accusing the People Power Party, which won recent elections, of being a proxy of ousted premier Thaksin Shinawatra, a court official said Friday.

The decision could jeopardise the future of the PPP -- made up of former members of Thaksin's dissolved Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party -- even though it won 233 of the 480 seats in December 23 polls, the first since the coup in 2006.

An official at the Supreme Court said that they would hear the case against the PPP on January 15. Other complaints against the Election Commission (EC), which could lead to the poll being nulli-

fied, will be heard January 11 and 16.

"The judge on Thursday ordered the court to hear three election fraud cases," said the court official, who did not want to be named.

Samak Sundaravej, the PPP's leader, accused unnamed elements of trying to sabotage their efforts to form a government.

"They are trying hard to topple us by asking the court to void the election," he said.

"There are many obstacles in politics because of the invisible and dirty hand," he told the Thai parliament radio station.

PPP's victory dealt a blow to the military, who tried to purge Thailand of Thaksin's influence after ousting him in a bloodless coup in September 2006.

## Bush calls on Israel to dismantle settlements

AFP, Jerusalem

US President George W Bush called on Israel to dismantle wildcat settlement outposts on occupied Palestinian land, in an interview published on Friday ahead of his visit to the region next week.

"We expect them to honour their commitments," Bush said in the interview with Israel's mass-selling Yediot Aharonot daily.

"The Israeli government has said that they're going to get rid of unauthorised settlements, and that's what we expect. That's what we've been told," he said, according to an English-language transcript of the interview provided by the newspaper.

Asked whether he supported Israel retaining some of its large settlement blocs in the occupied West Bank under a final-status agreement, Bush said: "Both understand, as well, that I said conditions on the ground, the realities of the situation will help determine what... the borders look like."

"But the unauthorised settlements, which is different from authorised settlements, is an issue we've been very clear on."

Wildcat outposts are Israeli settlements established in the West Bank without government permission. The international community considers all Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian land as illegal.

The issue of Israeli settlements is one of the most divisive issues of the decades-long Middle East conflict and has been the leading source of discord since the two sides revived peace talks after nearly a seven-year hiatus in late November.

Bush said he was embarking on his first trip to the region while president "to help boost the confidence of both parties to reach out for a vision."

"I'm also going to the Arab world... to convince the Arab nations that Israel is a partner -- should be a partner in peace; that this vision is in the interests not only of Israel and the Palestinians, but it's in the interests of the Arab world." "The American president can help move the process forward by reminding friends and allies in the Middle East about the importance of the two-state solution and what they can do to help."

His talks in the region will also touch on the issue of Iran, he said, saying he would "spend time talking about the strategic implications of a US presence in a way that bolsters governments and at the same time helps serve as a bulwark against aggressive regimes such as Iran."

The United States is leading a campaign in the West against Iran's nuclear programme, which it fears could be a cover for ambitions to build atomic weapons.

## Rights group calls for UN monitors for Lanka

Japan voices concern

AFP, Washington Tokyo

Human Rights Watch called Thursday for a UN human rights monitoring mission in Sri Lanka in the wake of the breakdown of the 2002 ceasefire agreement between the government and the Tamil Tiger secessionists.

The New York-based group said new monitors were needed to replace the Norwegian-led Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, which is pulling out due to the end of the ceasefire.

"The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission was deeply flawed, but its monitors helped to minimize abuses against civilians," said HRW's deputy Asia director Elaine Pearson in a statement.

Meanwhile, Japan voiced deep concern on Friday about the Sri Lankan government's decision to end its 2002 truce with Tamil Tiger rebels.

"Our country is deeply concerned that the decision by the Sri Lankan government would not only further stall the peace process but also worsen the conflict," Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura said in a statement.

"Our country strongly hopes that the procedures needed for progress in the peace process will be implemented swiftly."



National League for Democracy Party (NLD) members gather at NLD headquarters to mark the country's 60th independence day in Yangon yesterday. Military-run Myanmar put on a show of defiance on the 60th anniversary of independence from Britain amid global pressure for reform following the junta's bloody crackdown on dissent.

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