

SCRIPT POLITICAL IMPASSE KENYA

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LEAD

New and rising political tensions in Kenya.
There the president and the prime minister are entangled in a fierce power struggle.
That showed very imminent when the prime minister tried to suspend two ministers over corruption allegations,
and the president reinstated them only a few hours later.
Kenya is still relatively calm, but many fear the country could fall back in violence like after the December 2007 presidential elections.
The forming of a fragile coalition government brought a halt to that violence.
Nonetheless there is a still a struggle going on between different ethnic communities in the country.

SCRIPT LENGTH 3'35"

In Kenya the reinstatement of the suspended two ministers raised question marks over prime minister Odinga's authority.
He and President Kibaki were forced together in one cabinet after mediation by former UN secretary general Kofi Annan.
Ending months of violence which erupted after the 2007 presidential elections.

SOUNDBITE SHOOTING

But the exact powers of the prime minister were not clearly defined.
Political analyst Francois Girignon of the International Crisis Group has studied Kenyan politics for 18 years.
He says the current events are not about corruption.

QUOTE FRANCOIS GIRIGNON, International Crisis Group

The current wrangle is very much a political stunt to try to make the most out of two scandals in which enemies of the prime minister are involved.
But as far as the real fight against that would in fact include comprehensive and balanced clean up of the system.
This is yet on the agenda, and we are yet to see whether the prime minister would actually support it.

This power struggle paralyzes the government that apart from corruption needs to address mass poverty in the country.

SOUNDBITE CRYING CHILD

It even urged peace broker Kofi Annan to call for an end to the dispute. Meanwhile the common people in Kenya see another round of failing leadership, and again ask the principles to reconcile.

QUOTE

And if Raila and Kibaki cannot come together and solve this matters. Kenyans are really frustrated and worried about the government we're having.

QUOTE

We want them to move forward and speak with one voice for the better of our country.

QUOTE

They have to come together first and solve their differences before they talk to Kenyans.

QUOTE

It's a problem between the two of them. They need to solve it the two of them. It's affecting the whole country.

Then the dispute exactly comes at the moment that political parties line up for the 2012 elections.

QUOTE FRANCOIS GIRIGNON, International Crisis Group

So the main focus of the political battle or power struggle is the positioning for the next general elections, and who will be able to capitalize on this transition to make the successful bid for the presidency.

SOUNDBITE GUNSHOT

And Kenyans didn't forget the previous elections, where many lost family in the clashes. The situation remains calm yet, but many fear escalation.

QUOTE

When politicians start disagreeing is when they go back to their tribes, and start telling them to come up against one and other.

QUOTE

It makes us remember the year 2007, and all this ways from 2007 up to now. In fact Kenyans are still on fear.

QUOTE

The two of them have that problem. The problem will rise again, and the people will suffer.

The ICG foresees small scale violence because of lost of trust in the government.

QUOTE FRANCOIS GIRIGNON, International Crisis Group

That means that Kenyans might not regain confidence in the judiciary, the province administration.

And that there can be a neutral and balanced arbitrage for conflict resolution, but they will continu to take the law into their own hands, and settle their scores themselves.

Odinga is still waiting for a meeting with the president, and so far he maintained his claim to have the power to appoint and suspend ministers.