



International  
Council  
of Unitarians  
and Universalists

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Dear Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist friends,

Many of you have expressed concern about the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Kenya and have wondered what you might do to help. For many this has been spurred by aid requests coming directly from one of several Kenyan Unitarian groups in Kenya. On Monday we received a communication from a group in Nairobi that assures us that things are starting to return to normal. Another group in the rift has sent several messages asking for assistance. Even as the political crisis subsides, life will likely be very difficult for the poorest population, and the need for food and medical assistance will continue for some time. Of course the choice of how best to render assistance is yours to make, but here is some information that might help.

First, the ICUU is not an aid organization. We have neither the resources nor the personnel to effectively collect and distribute aid at this time.

Second, as mentioned, there is more than one Unitarian group functioning in the country. While we are actively encouraging their development, none of these groups have become officially part of the ICUU even at the emerging group status. We are only beginning to get to know them. We are hesitant about supporting one group over another or encouraging direct aid for one group over another when we have no way of evaluating their ability for distributing aid.

We do know that the American UUSC has two program partners in Kenya. They aren't involved with disaster relief, but with longer term development/social change:

KENASVIT -

<http://www.uusc.org/programs/econjustice/workersrights/kenasvitphotos.html>

Rock Women Group -

<http://www.uusc.org/programs/econjustice/womensday2007.html>

The UUSC can assure their accountability and donations to them can be made through the UUSC.

Additionally, the Church World Service has set up a funding mechanism that supports indigenous aid groups in both Nairobi and the Rift Valley area. They are also a reliable organization that many US UU congregations affiliate with through their annual "Crop Walk".

<http://churchworldservice.org/news/archives/2008/01/834.html>.

Finally, the International Red Cross (<http://www.icrc.org/eng>) is standing ready to assist the Kenyan Red Cross, but needs are still being assessed. While it is apparently not yet possible to donate to the Kenyan situation through their website, we are sure you can do so through local branches. Supporting the Red Cross efforts helps all Kenyans regardless of religious or tribal affiliation.

We grieve for the suffering of all Kenyan people during this crisis and in particular for our Unitarian brothers and sisters.

Rev. Brian Kiely

Unitarian Church of Edmonton

President, International Council of Unitarians and Universalists

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