

Dispatches from a Month of Crisis

Editor's Note: In the wake of Kenya's disputed December 27th elections, large portions of the country faced violence and fear. From the eye of the storm in Eldoret, Dr. Joe Mamlin and Sarah Ellen Mamlin wrote dozens of daily messages home to their family and their colleagues at the IU-Kenya Partnership. Likely, you have read about this crisis in the international media. But we thought you would appreciate the opportunity to read a very condensed summary of the Mamlins' dispatches. These messages document a very personal and first-hand view of a month that challenged not only the viability of the Indiana-Moi partnership, but the future of an entire nation. Unless otherwise noted, these messages are written by Joe Mamlin.

December 29, 2007

AM: I feel something wonderful is happening in Kenya. There was every reason to expect chaos with these elections but all is quiet. One can sense a combination of pride and excitement as Kenyans begin to sense the real power of their vote. Surely lots of "messes" await us but hard to deny evidence of a real growth spurt.

PM: Hold on a bit! I just made the mistake of trying to go downtown in Eldoret and that turned out to be impossible. People are running everywhere. Traffic rules were suspended as everyone began driving away from town as fast as they could. I felt fortunate to make my way down the road by the Siam restaurant and back home. So much for my usual optimism. Bob, our gardener just made it to our compound at the same time. He saw two people on the road with their throats cut. Violent demonstrations are now popping up across Kenya.

Sarah Ellen and I along with Shawn and family are now on a lock down in the compound. Will keep you informed. All of this started when the population began to sense Kibaki was closing the gap with Raila in suspicious ways.

January 1, 2008 4AM

Sarah Ellen sleeps as do 9 Kenyan friends rescued from the pain around them----they are doubled up in our 5 spare beds.

Later this morning, word will be coming in re: the horror of the night for too many here in Eldoret and beyond. Strange how one can find peace inside but so hard to make it happen "outside".

While I am known for my pathologic optimism, I do see the beginnings of healing. Four members of the Electoral Commission [whose vote tally lit the match] have come out asking for an independent inquiry on their work since they now admit to the potential of serious flaws in their count. A few Kenyan leaders are beginning to act like leaders and ask for dialogue between groups. The media has the courage to begin reporting again in spite of GOK orders.

These next few days will determine much of this fragile country's future. Many have been shocked by their rapid fall into chaos. It is time for statesmanship and leadership.

January 1, 2008 11AM

In some parts of town it is getting worse. Even Francis, our brave driver who rescued Lucy yesterday, just called. He cannot hang on where he is. Gangs are killing and burning. Rumors of rival tribal gangs on the way.

Francis just arrived with his group. Francis gives a frightening story. Kalenjins have been burning out the Kikuyu---even the house next to him. Now he hears that the feared Mungiki [ritual killers of the first order---all Kikuyu] gangs are on the way with weapons and will now seek revenge against the Kalenjin, Luo and Luhya. They hear that the new government is arming the Mungiki and helping them get here.

Truth is the first casualty of war and it is so hard to get facts. But it is clearly getting worse on this beautiful New Year Day. We are taking in all people in danger without regard to anything. We have pooled our food and will share what we have. Just sent Javan with Peninah to her village to buy up all available grain and vegetables. The IU compound is just as full as we projected for this time of the year but instead of US visitors, we are surrounded by grateful friends.

Two stories: Helen is here with us. She watched her landlady die from panga cuts and her husband die with bow and arrow. She has been my patient for over 5 years. She is now living in our house.

Our night guard Sammy greeted me with a hearty happy New Year this morning. Though he guarded us all night, I found that he had been burned out the night before. (Sammy is a Kalenjin who has lived in Eldoret all of his life. On the night after the elections were announced, he heard what he described as war-cries from the mountain top. He could recognize that they were the same cries of his community during war and raids. He became terribly frightened. He went outside to look and then heard the screams clearly. He followed toward them and found some of his long term friends and neighbors who happened to be Kikuyu and Kisii in tears and their houses ablaze. He was told that the Kalenjins had burned their houses. He could not understand how that could happen. He felt unsafe and sorry for his friends. He also felt at a loss because he could not help his friends for fear of punishment from the arsonists. He decided to return to his house, gather a few things and flee.

As he approached his home, he saw smoke rising from the sky. Only when he got closer did he realize that it was his house on fire! Apparently, the Kikuyus had torched his house in retaliation for their houses being burned by the Kalenjins. He did not manage to salvage anything and fled empty handed for sanctuary in the IU compound.)

The most fearful words imaginable just hit my ears this morning. One of those in my house asked when is the US coming in to save everyone from another Rwanda? Deep in their hearts

they fear just the kind of genocide that seemed impossible even in Rwanda. Surely, we will not let that happen again---not here.

Sanity must come quickly or we will pass a point that is difficult to return from.

I STILL remain hopeful

I was just signing off this note and Daniel Ochieng and Lucy and neice just came to the door. Burning/killing all around them and they fear for their lives. I sent them to house three to look for Sarah Ellen who is preparing rooms as quickly as possible. "Welcome to the IU House."

January 1, 2008 9:00 PM

This will go down as the worst day of my life. In the emergency room I step over the dead to reach for those dying.

When I headed down the hall toward the ER one could tell we were in real trouble. When I looked into a large room to my left [usually a holding room for those not so sick] every bench was filled with injured people. I saw one woman sitting stoically with the skin peeling off her legs from her burns----she was a survivor from the dreadful church burning I was about to hear about. There were so many children among the group waiting for care. As I entered the area usually reserved for the sicker patients, it was horrible. Perhaps 40-50 people needed care at the same time. There were very few nurses or doctors available. Then I entered the room held for the sickest patients. Every cot held a severely injured person. Several bodies were on the floor still on stretchers. One had to step over them to get to those still alive. The head of the ER, a surgeon was fortunately on the job. He was trying to triage patients into clusters depending on acuity. He immediately told me they were in big trouble. The hospital was out of needles, suture material and IV fluids. They were reduced to using the same needle as they moved from patient to patient.

Called the owner of Eldochem and he met me at his shop within 10 minutes. Loaded my car to the brim with all of his IV fluids, tubing and suture sets and returned to the ER.

Many burns along with at least a hundred with lacerations all over their bodies. Too many were just bodies. We lost an unknown number of children in Eldoret in a single church fire. Some guess more than 200 children died in this single blaze. (Ultimately, it was determined that 35 people died.) Many of the burned adults and children survivors are in our ER.

Got our food truck and formed a caravan: Armed guards in front and behind, our truck, I was in a Kenyan Red Cross truck. We drove to the Eldoret airport to pick up supplies flown in to us by the Red Cross. We loaded literally tons of wonderful supplies and just got them back to the hospital. Even included a Red Cross trauma surgeon who flew up with the supplies.

The drive to the airport is just too much. There are fires in all directions as homes and shops burn. Literally hundreds of refugees walk along the road. Sometimes it is 30-50 children and a single adult walking along carrying what they can. The road itself was cluttered by large stones that represented road blocks where they look in the car for those who are the "wrong tribe".

There must be 20 blocked areas in that short drive. Most abandoned but not all. Passed many burned out homes and shops on the way.

Standing on the tarmac of the airport, I could see smoke coming up on the horizon in all directions. Just how could this beautiful country and people and program be so radically changed in just a few hours?

I will not be able to process what I have seen; perhaps never understand my feelings. Be assured that the human genome needs many more years of evolution if it can get there biologically. The only way I can see to jump our inherent flaws as a race is to encounter something deeper in our lives than just self. It is a precious thing to have a deep feeling of being changed by our faith. Never take that for granted. It is all that gives sanity to what I have seen today.

We prepare for our first meal of the day. Up to 70 of our Kenyan friends have found peace in our compound. We will eat as a family.

January 2, 2008

As far as I know, we have not lost a single AMPATH staff member or patient. Unfortunately, it is almost impossible to run clinics since there are no matatus [van-taxi] running. It took almost three hours for one of our pharmacist to walk by foot to give us access to drugs. Most staff are busy securing safety of loved ones and most patients are either afraid or can't travel.

I took heart in an ER this morning when I no longer needed to step over a body.

Eldoret is quiet today but all roads in and out remain blocked by unpredictable gangs. Many residential areas of Eldoret are insecure and many of our friends are simply scared to death. We are doing all we can to help with the many needs of our Kenyan friends seeking safety. We can find food as of today since a few markets reopened. And we have our farms. Can't get the food out to patients so will harvest food to help feed our compound and the many refugee centers that have popped up in churches and jails.

IU House has grown from the two of us to 130 Kenyan guests, half of them children, each with their own story and need for protection. They were from every tribe----never, never an issue inside the compound; a life and death issue outside. Most of the families join in to make living together a community. People cooked together and washed together. Spontaneously, refugees who work with children at the hospital chose to create a gathering time each evening for the many children housed in our compound

Overall, though, we have witnessed sad evidence that we as a human family have a lot of growing yet to do. When you think a moment, you realize the IU-Kenya Program is at its core symbolizes what is so critically needed by Kenyan leadership. This is not a program dedicated to building medical schools or even stamping out a pandemic. At its heart, it is a program that screams "Yes" in a world ready to say "No". This program puts love and compassion front and center. Those values build the rest. When that message is embraced here, we can go home.

We are unable to stop what is now happening, but we are rock solid in keeping to our core message.

January 2

This is our first "work day" since this all fell apart. Kimaiyo and I will survey the staff and supplies at all clinics.

Major problems is danger of road travel and the absence of petrol for our vehicles. We plan to run clinics with their local staff only. I will not head out to Mosoriot this morning for the first Wednesday in over six years.

If meds are short and we can't travel, suspect we will pool petrol, get armed escorts and take drugs to sites but too early to know if any of this is necessary. Be assured all clinics will stay open. I have even pondered putting together a plan on how to safely stop ARVS in a patient if we have no other choice.

Getting formula to moms is another problem to solve today. Don't see how we can move food. I have asked Kimaiyo to consider sharing AMPATH food with those on church grounds and in jail compounds who may have nothing. Again, need to see if shops open today as planned or all will stay in hiding.

January 3

Coming from Kaptagat today Yusuf's windscreen on the driver's side was broken by pelting rocks at one of the many roadblocks he encountered. The Thursday march by ODM in Nairobi is still on. This holds the potential of real disaster. If they try to march and the police actually shoot, all hell will descend on us all.

The ER is very quiet today. I view this a possible sign that we are turning the corner. I realize that most roads outside Eldoret are still blocked but think we would have heard if a rash of new injuries were out there waiting help. This hopeful sign will be all but lost if gangs are massing for revenge in Naivasha or the ODM march turns violent tomorrow.

Still no matatus in town. All employees and patients had to travel by foot today. Hate to imagine what might be happening to adherence to medication, etc for many of our patients. Sarah Ellen and I have returned to full tanks of diesel since a station was open today.

Dear Mr. Yu, owner of the Chinese restaurant just brought over loads of frozen chicken (20) from his closed business. It was a gift to help feed the many we have on the IU compound now.

There is an eerie quiet around here today. We are either on our way out of this mess or it is the calm before hell descends on this place. My personal guess is we are turning the corner.

January 3

Elizabeth came to me after rounds this morning. She has been my patient for some time. She said, "I have been burned out. All is gone. I have only 100 shillings and these clothes I am wearing." I had never wondered about which tribe Elizabeth was from before so now I asked. Her response was "Kikuyu". I gave her 1,000 Kenyan shillings to pay her fare to join the long caravan in town headed for the safety of Central Province. Gave her my water and my three secret breakfast bars. I wanted to give her an embrace as she left. Did give her a two month supply of antiretrovirals. Pray I will see her again.

I'm attaching one of the saddest pictures of all as we watch an endless caravan of Kikuyus evacuating from Eldoret this morning under military guard. With the Kikuyu leaving we open up the risk of a deep wound that will be hard to heal.

January 4

(From Sarah Ellen Mamlin, who serves as the warden (U.S. Embassy liaison with U.S. citizens) for the Eldoret area):

The American representative said basically the Embassy is advising Americans to stay put and quiet within their compounds because we are not the object of the roving gangs' wrath. We all agreed that this is a tribal conflict. Their advice is **STAY IN YOUR HOMES!!**

We talked about evacuation plans. There are several trigger points between governments that need to be hit before the US Government issues an evacuation order - even for their own employees. We do not know exactly what those would be, but we have not reached them.

We were asked to emphasize that if we are harboring any refugees, we are creating a risk for ourselves. Be conscious of that! We also responded that those of us here may have calculated the risk. . .

Upon returning home, our gardener came in with a tale of losing his family last night when a home to the left of the school was burned and all ran to the right ~ and then a home on the right burst into flames. At that point everyone scattered. His children are lost. This morning youths accosted him upon his return to find the family. He was saved by the fact one of the boys knew his daughter and vouched for him. It's not over yet!

Sarah Ellen Mamlin

January 4

Kimaiyo called a meeting of some of AMPATH leadership---at least those accessible. It is worth noting that 30-40% of those who showed up had themselves been forced to vacate their homes. Our intention was to begin sorting out how to put this monster back together. Gracious me, the problems are very challenging:

- It is likely that less than 5% of patients have been able to reach us this week! This has enormous implications for infected babies and potential resistance, etc. We decided to move immediately to try and reach our patients since they clearly struggle to get to us. Many are displaced, some evacuated to other parts of the country, some without access to transport since matatus are not running and others fear attack on the road. Since we give only a one month supply, we know that literally thousands are at risk NOW of stock out. We called Buck and pleaded for an immediate public service announcement on all radios and TV's. We want to tell people who have no means of contact to stop all ARVS at once rather than sequentially; preferably we want them to call a single phone number where we will give advice on an even better way to stop ARVs; encourage if possible to go to any MOH ARV center and we will ask all sites to give med refills without questions. Buck is working on this now.
- ARV supply: Have about one month supply but it is in Eldoret. Calling all sites to assess stock. We know some are critically short. We will give ANYONE who comes a one month supply regardless of care system. Major problem is transport. We are arranging a guarded convoy of our food trucks [2-3] to take adequate supplies to all sites ASAP.
- We have no way to deliver OI (opportunistic infection) meds. Will try to get enough cash to sites to buy critically missing antibiotics when needed.
- Staff: We have no idea re status of staff. We know many are displaced and others afraid to move. Leadership at each site to call all their staff and make a report ASAP. We are trying to get as many as possible to report back to work on Monday. Expect this to be a huge problem but simply need to get the facts before trying to solve the problem.
- Medical Records: we have no one in data management. Suspect it can come slowly back to life but lack vehicles or petrol or drivers [have only two of 35 drivers available at the moment---just to give you a picture of the issues. They fear the roads and gangs, etc]. We will use encounter forms but simply leave them in the chart until another day. If a clinic is so understaffed that it can't do encounter forms [like the AMPATH Center this week] we will simply give out drugs.
- Food. Red Cross is helping distribute. Feel it is dangerous for AMPATH to be delivering to those in need since those seen helping can be targeted. We will take excess food to Red Cross center to let them distribute. We just don't have the drivers, trucks or petrol to deliver food to our sites for now. Almost no workers to harvest from our farms. Most are in makeshift refugee sites at churches, jails, etc. We plan to use prisoners to harvest for us. We will give food to the prison and excess to our needs.
- Many of our staff have either lost their homes or afraid to return. Many are homeless and lost everything. We are forming an AMPATH committee to see how to help as many as possible. We would like for those trying to raise money to help us in this crisis to consider forming an AMPATH STAFF FUND. We will use this to move people to safety, pay rent, clothes, emergency food and get them back to work.
- Need to create a patient support fund. No idea about eventual need. Please add this to your request for help in the US.
- Lab: Rita will see what she can put together. Aware that it is unlikely we can transport specimens/reports at the moment.

It is a tough call to say if we can put this back together. But it felt good to be fighting back--- even in a small way.

Jan. 4

Just a note to mention a bit re risk and pulse.

- We have numerous messages re risk to ourselves by harboring Kikuyu in our compound. This comes from the US Embassy and Kenyans. We have minimized the risks by limiting the US citizens on the compound to Sarah Ellen and me. We will NEVER ask anyone to leave nor we will turn anyone away. Took 9 more people just 30 minutes ago even though we are full. As Sarah Ellen quoted someone else doing the same in Eldoret, "this is as close to heaven as we are likely to get".
- Our Kenyan colleagues e.g. Kimaiyo, Nyandiko take seriously rumors that plans are underway to poison the water supply of Eldoret. Those who would do this were waiting for the Kikuyu to be evacuated---thousands more left this morning in a giant convoy under armed guard----such a sad site of a world being pulled apart at its center. I know some Eldoret people are now patrolling the water supply. I view this as rumor and bluff but did want you to know what I hear. The level of hate and need for revenge is frightening. Unless a miracle of reconciliation occurs soon in Nairobi, this could be the calm before the storm. In spite of it all. Broken world; broken dreams; broken program--- --we will not quit and still believe we can find a way out of this.

Sarah Ellen and I were too busy to go to dinner tonight, so one of our guests brought us food--- beans and rice but at least no ugali tonight. As I carried the plates back over to the main dining room, I heard singing. I came back and told Sarah Ellen we needed a three minute break from our work and we walked back together.

The adults had created their own worship service. They all sang together then they all begin to pray at the same time. It was not like any prayer I had ever seen before. Likely each person there was from a different denomination but each prayed aloud simultaneously.

It had a beauty that defined prayer. Tears rolled down all cheeks as they became one with God. The prayer of many voices transitioned into beautiful music. Every tribe now at war prayed and cried together tonight on the IU compound. At the same time, all of the children were in another room forming a living carpet as volunteers read to them or played with them.

I know church when I "feel" it down deep. This was church.

Jan. 5 AM

Late morning I went out again. WE ARE TURNING THE CORNER. If the politicians can avoid pouring gasoline on the fire, I see a rapid return to safety but not "normal" as we have known it. I was able to get by a machinegun toting guard and actually cash an IU check in Barclays. I then was able to get a haircut! Newspapers are appearing, Saw matatus driving crazy like usual.

Food and clothes are beginning to appear on the side of the road for those who can buy. About 30% of shops are open.

By mid week, we should have a handle on just what we are facing in AMPATH.

If stable and improving by Wednesday, we will start the process of emptying IU House. Before then will ponder what it will take to be kind to those with greatest loss or greatest fear.

We will begin immediately to re-invent AMPATH. It will not be the same. Too many patients lost; too many staff lost. But we will move toward a process that will represent the very best humanly possible.

I predict that the greatest loss will be loss of spirit---wounded by the realization that a bit of Rwanda is in all of us

Jan 5 PM

Gracious, is it hard to read the tea leaves here.

Lucy spent the night in her home last night. I thought she would come to take Daniel home from our compound. Instead she returns with her back pack with nothing but fear in her eyes. She says the Pokot tribe has been brought in to finish the job. She says they don't speak Swahili and only indicate they have come to "kill". People fear the Pokot. Even if they are targeting any remaining Kikuyu everyone fears being caught in the cross fire. She says that all houses in her community are abandoned and most are now being looted since they know no one is home.

Boniface, a leader in our data management team brought his van to park in our compound today. He says his neighborhood faces a pending major battle with a core of Kikuyu who have refused to run. He has moved his family out. He had no food yesterday when I spoke to him by phone. When I saw him today he had food for his family but no intention of returning to his home anytime soon.

All I know is fear continues to grip these poor people. The potential for healing is deeply submerged at the moment. We will see.

Just letting you share in the schizophrenic rollercoaster ride that is now our life. I am capable of sending you good news and in five minutes describe horror---and *vice versa*.

Caught in a Kafka short story

January 7

We have turned the corner. Loads of work but we are on the way. Some people are already beginning to prepare to leave the IU compound. Hope is popping up everywhere. Keep your fingers crossed.

Some clinics are beginning to see over 100 patients per day again.

January 10

Bob, a few comments as of today:

- Burnt Forest (clinic) is a real mess. They saw only 20 patients yesterday. A series of IDP (internally displaced persons) camps house huge numbers of Kikuyu extending south from Burnt Forest along the highway. Many of these Kikuyu patients have difficulty getting to the clinic. The majority of the Kalenjins have quit coming to clinic because they fear the nearby Kikuyu and the risk of vengeance attacks.
- Kitale (clinic) also looked like a mess. With only 40-50 patients showing up per day, it was frightening. We sent a team up there today and luckily, over 200 patients showed up and all of a sudden there is hope again there. The biggest IDP camp there is almost all Kiisi but that group is outside our catchment and likely has few of our patients.
- Our hot line is really generating lots of calls.
- Major Eldoret camps are now manned by AMPATH staff as needed.
- All labs are up and running
- AMPATH food will begin distant distribution tomorrow for the first time.
- The latest tally is 20 staff burned out; 34 displaced [unable to return home for safety reasons] and 37 are stranded but most now finding their way back to work.

Lots to do but if the politicians would give us a break, we could do something.

A note about one of our IU House residents: Francis has been my patient for 5 years. He is age 34 and has a wife and three children. He has been living about 21 kms from Eldoret where he bought a 1/8 acre piece of land. There he grew corn, cabbage, beans and raised pigs and chickens. Everything was fine until 31st of December.

At 3 PM, a group of about 400 people surrounded the estate where he lived. They were armed with machetes, clubs, arrows, axes, sticks, swords and stones. They were demanding the immediate evacuation of the area by all Kikuyus---Francis is Kikuyu. Some of the people in the group were well known to him. They had lived as neighbors since he moved there.

Francis immediately took his wife and children to the chief's compound and returned to his homestead to protect his belongings. He found his house on fire and some of the arsonists were still around destroying all his belongings. His pigs and chickens were either slashed to death or burned alive. Some people were hacked to death and some of his friends were injured. Some of his friends were burned alive in the nearby church where they had taken refuge.

Returning to the chief's compound, he found there were only four armed policemen and was no longer certain if they [mainly Kalenjins] would protect his family. The following day, the chief was given an ultimatum that he had less than three hours to get the people on his compound out of the area or else they would be killed.

January 11th

Poor Jennifer, one of our star clinical officers at Turbo, rode back to Eldoret with me, along with a patient with cardiac tamponade that needed emergency tap. She had a typical but painful story. She is Kalenjin and her husband is Kikuyu. The husband and her three children were evacuated to Nairobi for safety. Her mother advised her not to come home to her rural village for safety since she married a Kikuyu. She is frightened in her home alone. Several of the last few nights she has chosen to sleep on the lawn of the Eldoret Police Station. I invited her to our home if she feels unsafe in her own home.

January 15

I have been amazed by the loyalty and commitment of the AMPATH Kenyan staff. They have taken every risk to stay at their posts. Many of our workers have lost homes or have been forced to separate members of their families to safer locations but the core of AMPATH is working overtime to meet the needs of our patients. I am so proud of my Kenyan colleagues---they cannot be stopped.

Displacement is more than a Kikuyu phenomenon. So many rental houses were burned because they were owned by Kikuyus. But those displaced are frequently Kalenjin, Luo and Luhya. While the target may have been Kikuyu the displacement is no respecter of tribe.

AMPATH was the most affected by this crisis so it is no surprise we were the first to hit the airways, newspapers and TV in every local language possible with advice for our displaced patients. They have given all necessary advice including how to best stop ARVs if that becomes necessary. We have given out a 24/7 hotline number in all announcements that has had an enormous response.

I fully expect all AMPATH sites to weather this storm, find the majority of their patients and continue to grow in comprehensive care. AMPATH provides HIV care to ~ 60,000 patients. I fully expect this number to double over the next five years.

Let's keep our eye on the target: Careful attention to those infected and affected by HIV in western Kenya. That problem has not gone away and neither will we.

January 21

All is quiet at the moment in Eldoret. All nearby roads are open.

One of the nice "hugs" in this chaos occurred this morning when Christine reported for duty. Christine, a Kikuyu, proudly stated, "I will not change my name until someone pays the right number of cows!" Christine knows we will protect her in every way possible. She knows to come without announcement to our home is she feels the least bit threatened.

We heard this morning that increasing numbers of gangs armed with guns have been holding up cars for money. A transition from political/tribal agendas to simple banditry. We have no confirmed reports of this happening to our many AMPATH cars on the road but it has heightened our need for security. We have joined with an NGO from Nairobi to help lead relief

planning for this area. They have the money to hire security details as we send our food and drugs far and wide.

Still, we remain with hope.

January 25

While talks continue, so do fires and death. At least 8 have been killed and perhaps over 100 homes burned in Nakuru. Gangs have blocked the road to Nairobi from Nakuru---at least at the moment.

We have had approx 20 homes burned in Eldoret today but no one killed as far as I know at the moment. Most violence is in Langas slums. All major roads in town are open.

I suspect many roads are blocked at night. On my trip to Turbo clinic today, I found many power lines down and the poles were pulled to block the road. The road had been cleared but in several places the poles were still burning but pulled to the side.

These days remain tense while we see if Kofi Annan can break through the rigid facade of "talks". As I have said, if Annan fails, we could see even worse violence.

Dare we continue to hope for a breakthrough? We do---but with eyes wide open.

January 28

I was unable to travel this morning secondary to road blocks. At the moment, all roads in and out of Eldoret are blocked. In the case of the road I wanted to take this morning, they are digging a deep trench across the road so the police will not be able to reverse their blockade. I understand that Turbo [again where I was headed] is even worse. I mention the following: New violence now reported in Kakamega along with Nakuru and Naivasha. Trouble just beyond Burnt Forest as well.

- Several new house burnings reported in nearby estates of Eldoret. This town is tense as I have seen it. Trouble is expected sometime today. Most centers around rumors of Mungiki infiltration and retribution attacks.
- Expect new attacks on Kikuyu and Kiisi locally in retaliation to what people hear about attacks on Kalenjin and Luo in Nakuru and Naivasha.
- We will concentrate today on safety of our minority workers in AMPATH.

We remain in a tough phase of this journey. We will continue to do the best we can under the circumstances.

January 29

There is much we don't know even around our own area due to such a mixture of word of mouth and rumor but I "think" the following is close:

- In spite of the tension and expected major invasions [Mungiki on the one hand and Nandi warriors on the other] no major attack occurred.
- All roads in and out of Eldoret remain closed. Battles at roadblocks last night resulted in 5 people shot on the west side of town [one dead, four in the MTRH] and one shot at a road block between Eldoret and Burnt Forest [in MTRH]. Don't know for sure but suspect most represents police no longer "shooting in the air".
- Eldoret remains tense but quiet.
- We have about 70 in the IU compound---all in one tense day.

We are fine and continue to make it from event to event. Kimaiyo is busy doing a full assessment by phone of all sites and their stress. Concerned because clinical officers can't get to stations and our medical officers haven't been on site for almost a month. One brilliant new medical officer is Kikuyu. She dares to report for duty but we cannot send her out. Am toying with idea of having her cover at MTRH and thus free up some of us to go to distant sites like Port Victoria etc.

Bob, did you know that Washira the architect who was killed not only was the one we depended on for PV, Khunyangu and Busia projects but he is the designer and day to day person for the mother baby hospital? We are trying to regroup around all of these issues and get back to you this week.

More later. I need to get back to MTRH.

January 30

Overwhelming numbers of Kenyans are just as outraged as the outside world by what is happening here. You never see tribalism among our staff, the hospital, medical students and on and on. But in a land of poverty with up to 40% unemployment, politicians have long found the fodder for their lust for power. The tribal "card" is always in the background here. The right match can light a firestorm. And as you know, mob mentality is unpredictable. I hear so many stories of young men of all tribes forced out at night to do the unthinkable. Many go because of threat of physical harm if they fail to join in. Others respond too readily to peer pressure. Many fathers have faced the threat of having his home burned if he failed to supply his sons for the battle. At other times a family's cattle are threatened if they don't join the gang. More than once my mind has pondered Germany before WWII. How could Jews be singled out? How could a majority remain silent? I am seeing how it is possible----perhaps it could happen anywhere if we fail to keep our guard up. I will be hesitant to appreciate efforts to divide us. I no longer like "red states" and "blue states". I don't like liberal or conservative. I will be more on guard at any effort to lump persons in a way that might in any way infer less value than another.

Any time humans can be lumped into inhuman categories, we feel less anguish at their death. We need to be careful with our lumping vocabulary: terrorist, insurgent, collateral damage, Kikuyu, Luo, Kalenjin and on and on. Surely the first step in diminishing the value of a precious individual is to lump them into a group whose elimination can feel justified.

The Kenyans in this house would give their lives for those around them regardless of tribe. I see that same commitment all around me. There are so many examples of Kalenjins and Kikuyu meeting among themselves and protecting each other. Last week it was a Kikuyu that came to me and pleaded that I provide funding for a Luo staying in our home whose son had just died in Kisumu. The good stories go on and on, but so does the violence.

Just a few good people can lift a society to heights never imagined, a few bad people are equally capable of dragging a society to the depths of shame. The rest of us are destined to struggle in the middle.

I think our safety hinges on avoiding a decay of any semblance of order around us. We have always felt anarchy was our biggest threat. So far a thread in the core of Eldoret has been able to hold itself together. As long as that continues and we use a bit of common sense when outside the compound, we will be OK.

It is clear that our Kenyan colleagues deeply appreciate our staying. It assures them of the steadfast commitment of Indiana University to their needs. If the Indiana University presence did not leave during these last few weeks, they know we are truly with them. Our staying made it possible for many others to leave without giving the impression of bailing out. We are thrilled to be the agents of that commitment.

January 30

When one writes the story of these days, we need to remember Javan, Sarah Ellen's fearless driver.

A plea came last night from Kapsabet that their bible college had three Kikuyu who needed to get out and they saw no way to escape. They called Sarah Ellen for help. She asked her driver, Javan if he would be willing to take her car and give it a try. For your information Kapsabet is about 20 minutes farther down the road past Mosoriot. I had travelled that road in the morning and knew of many road blocks but had been able to get around all of them. I feared for Javan if the road blocks were manned by gangs. They would surely kill the three Kikuyu and likely burn the car and perhaps even Javan. He and Sarah Ellen discussed taking a blanket to hide the three. I nixed that idea for fear it would only make them more suspicious. In fact my instructions were that if any road blocks were manned on the way out, he was to turn back.

Javan left before 4 AM for Kapsabet. One road block was not passable but was not manned. Javan is a heavy weight champion body builder. He got out of the car and alone lifted the log off the road. He was in Kapsabet by 5AM. He safely took the three Kikuyu to the safety of the Eldoret airport. They flew out on the plane that brought Naomi and Paul back to us. He brought them on to the IU House.

Hours later, Kapsabet exploded into violence. Cars are burning and several have been killed. I have no doubt that these three owe their lives to Javan.

Let the record show that Javan is Luhya and he risked his life for three Kikuyus. That doesn't make the press but is the best of this place in action.

January 31

We face an uncertain future here. Deep in my heart, I believe the violence will subside; political reform including a new constitution will create a magnet toward national identity and Kenya will once again lead Africa into the mainstream of the 21st Century. I believe that. All of this pain will inform us all what can happen when one's vigilance is compromised.

Yet, it remains possible that we are on a slippery slope toward civil war, anarchy and a failed state. I refuse to believe this or act in any way that anticipates this outcome. One Gandhi or Mandela could save us all. We must be saved by hope.

Sarah Ellen headed to bed at 3AM today, just as I got up to start my day. We have learned to love each other more than ever---we are a team. We are supported by the love of our family and the prayers of much of Indianapolis. Perhaps it is too easy to use the phrase "praying for you" or for one to diminish the significance of that comment directed your way. We now cherish each and every prayer. We find strength each day as extended hands from the Indianapolis community. IU, and my wife and I did not ask for this new "assignment". History has made it ours to do. IU, Indianapolis and our team on the ground here will not fail in what is now our journey.

I once had the privilege of sitting at the feet of Reinhold Niebuhr who said:

Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in a lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we are saved by love. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith.