

ELECTION VIOLENCE IN KENYA: TRACING THE ROOT AND HEALING THE WOUNDS

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ABSTRACT

Patterns of violence since 1992 have been triggered by bad governance. This leads to violence which indicates an obstacle to development. The main question then, is: why is it that whenever Kenya has an election there is an outbreak of violence? The researchers explore how bad governance contributes to violence in Kenya. Using evidence from the previous incidences of violence, they show that the conflict is characterized by deep – rooted intense animosity, fear and severe stereotyping (Lederach, 23:2000). Conflict leads to death, injury and destruction of property and internal displacement. Further relying on the historical evidence of the colonial settlement and displacement of people groups, this paper shows that the problems arising from election violence are a ‘new’ occurrence. They follow patterns of colonialism and the failure to decisively address land disputes all over the country. This paper also gives examples of the allocation and purchase of land in Kenya as part of the cause of violence during elections in this area. As the country prepares for another election season, the paper suggests various remedies to ensure that the country does not sink into the same situation. It is important to address election violence head on as the knock on effects can be felt for years. Politically, economically and socially, the effects are devastating.

Keywords: Kenya; Governance; Reconciliation; Election Violence.