

## Reflecting on the News from Kenya

Kenya has made the news in a number of ways lately:

- (another) marathon win for a Kenyan athlete
- discovery of early human tool use
- discovery of an aquifer under its northern desert
- peaceful elections
- hosting of the WTO (World Trade Organization) conference in Nairobi
- President Obama's announcement that he will visit his father's homeland.

While these and other events represent progress and positive developments in Kenya, Al Shabab terrorist attacks, the most recent occurring at the university in Garissa, stand in stark contrast.

### Historical View: Kenya and Somalia

Kenya and Somalia have a troubled history dating back to colonial rule and the division of the countries without regard to ethnic territories. With the rise of Al Shabab, an insurgent terrorist group in southern Somalia, Kenya has joined other nations contributing to African Union forces supporting the Somali Federal Government. Al Shabab has in turn made incursions into northern and eastern Kenya to carry out attacks such as the most recent one at the university in Garissa, which is in eastern Kenya, about 800 miles from the border with Somalia, as well as earlier ones in coastal areas and at the Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi.

### Putting It in Perspective

None of the single incidents listed above should define Kenya. Though not comparable in size to the US, Kenya is almost as large as Texas, larger than France or Germany. It has a population of over 45 million people, with over 40 ethnic groups and even more languages. Its recent history includes the actual creation of the country pursuant to European interests, attaining freedom from Great Britain in the 1963 and a new constitution in 2010.

Kiwimbi's work in Kenya is currently centered in the remote community of Amagoro in western Kenya (just a few miles from the Ugandan border) and far removed from Somalia and even from Nairobi. There is no history of terrorism in the area we serve.

### *Opportunity through education . . .*

Kiwimbi's focus is on education. As one of our Kenyan trustees, Peace Osangir, aptly put it:

*It is indeed true that an empty stomach has no ears. It is our hope, that we can continue, through Kiwimbi, to positively impact the community of Amagoro through education and create a generation that can make well informed decisions now and in the future for a better Kenya.*

We offer educational opportunities to all members of the community, trusting that they will take what they have learned and create better lives for themselves. Some will become more efficient farmers, some will carry their schooling to a higher level, some will discover skills that they can use to earn a better living. We believe that this is the best thing we can do to

assure that the focus of upcoming generations will be on improving their own lives, not destroying those of others.

### Traveling to Kenya

All Americans traveling in Kenya are advised to check online with the US Embassy in Nairobi for any travel warnings in the country and to sign up for the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) (<https://step.state.gov/step/>) to assure that they receive the most up to date security information.

The map below shows Garissa and Nairobi. Amagoro is close to the border of Uganda, west of Eldoret.

