



MATHEW K. ITEERE MGH., CBS.
COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR MESSAGE.

Let me take this opportunity to wish all Kenya Police officers a merry Christmas and happy new year. I want to start by appreciating all Kenya Police Officers who have devoted yet another year of their life in service of the republic of Kenya. Further, on my own behalf and on behalf of the entire police force, I thank the immediate former Commissioner of Police MAJ. GEN. HUSSEIN ALI MGH MBS and all other officers who honorably left the Kenya Police in 2009 after a devoting part of their lives in service of this country. We recognize and appreciate them all.

We have had a difficult but satisfying year. 2009 will go down in history as the year when the role of the Kenya Police in the stability and survival of our nation came into sharp focus. We have learnt a lot this year, as a nation and as a force. First and foremost, we have learnt about the urgency of reforming the way we do things and the need to improve our effectiveness in serving the nation. Our mandate to enforce the law and maintain law and order has been under constant test as criminals come up with new ways of breaking the law; we therefore need to adopt new approaches to remain a step ahead of criminals. Above all we must change the way we relate and interact with those whom we serve.

As we reflect on the many achievements and the challenges we faced this year, we must appreciate that 2010 will be the year of police reforms. As a starting point, it is incumbent upon every police officer to admit that our image is not very good in the eyes of many people and this is an impediment to our mission as a service. The question every police officer must ask himself is: what is my part in these reforms?

My instructions to commanders at every level are that they must understand the reform process and, in turn, assist the officers serving under them to identify their part in it. Let me emphasize that the failure or success of these reforms will be judged by how every officer conducts him or herself while on duty. We must conduct ourselves in accordance with the expectations of the public, who are our customers.

The government has promised to review our terms and conditions of service. We have promised to reform ourselves. Kenyans will be watching to see whether we are walking the talk. It is the responsibility of commanders at every level to provide leadership and see to it that every officer acts in conformity with the reforms process.

My office will do everything possible to coordinate with other government agencies and to mobilize friends of Kenya Police to support your efforts to keep our society safe. My objective is to transform every police station in this country into a centre of reliable service delivery. I am looking forward to your support in achieving that. Reports of unprofessional conduct and hooliganism in Police Stations and police officer on duty must come to an end. Police reforms should no longer be a theoretical concept, every individual police officer, Police Station, Division, Province and Formation must take concrete, visible and measurable steps to actualize police reforms.

It is therefore necessary that Formation and Provincial Commanders identify progress indicators in their areas of responsibility and proceed to ensure that they are well understood down to station level. For example, during my visits to Police Stations, I noted that the number of cases pending under investigation is significantly high. I also noticed the high rate of acquittals for want of evidence. These are some of the things you must take into consideration when drawing your measurement and evaluation tools.

At Police Headquarters, we are setting up mechanisms to coordinate your efforts and give policy guidance. We shall be watching closely and following your progress to ensure successful implementation of reforms. Officers should realize that whereas it is not my intention to lose any officer, no individual will be allowed to be a hindrance to the reform process.

Closely related to this is the issue of corruption. Let me appreciate and acknowledge the progress made in the fight against this vice, however, the situation remains far from satisfactory. The policy direction from my office remains zero tolerance to corruption. Extra focus must be put on traffic management, the Police Station and our officers on beat and patrol.

In terms of crime management, this year was a very challenging one. In arid and semi arid areas of the country, the prolonged drought brought in its wake severe competition for grazing fields. It also caused an increase in cattle rustling. In the urban areas, new forms of organized crimes such as kidnappings emerged. The lesson we learnt is that crime is evolving very fast and to defeat it, we must stay a step ahead.

Consequently, in September this year, we started a business re-engineering process. Part of the re-engineering was to entrench intelligence-lead policing as a permanent feature of our service delivery. I'm glad to note our efforts have started bearing fruits. Criminal gang related activities have considerably reduced as we dismantled kidnapping syndicates. It is also through intelligence that on the 7th of December we recovered the highest number of illegal firearms ever recovered by security forces in this country. I urge all our officers to keep up this effort so that we can reduce the fear of crime even further. Commanders at every level must emulate this effort of diligently collecting and acting on intelligence.

In the coming year, we shall be making deliberate efforts to revamp our partnerships with various communities of interest and other government agencies. This will improve our capacity to collect timely intelligence and plan appropriate response to make this country more secure. Officers must put extra efforts to strengthen community policing in order to duplicate this effort at every level.

The year 2009 is also the year that witnessed an unprecedented level of disasters. In Sachangwany, 135 people died when a fuel tanker caught fire following a road accident. Here in Nairobi, Nakumatt Downtown caught fire causing the death of 29 people. In Kiambu a building under construction collapsed and 15 people perished. In all these incidents I am satisfied to note our officers made every effort to manage the situation and save lives. I commend them for their courageous service. During some of these incidents our officer were injured and some even lost their lives. This underscores the need for us to carry out regular drills in disaster preparedness and coordinated response to avoid such regrettable casualties in future.

In this country, as in the rest of the world, environmental degradation and pollution pose a grave danger to the survival of man. Recently, the National Environmental Management Authority initiated some laws to protect all of us from noise pollution. I direct all our officers to study the new law carefully and enforce it with integrity.

In traffic law enforcement, I'm concerned at the rate of accidents and non-compliance of the high way code. Once again I direct Provincial Police Officers, Commandant Traffic, OCPDs and all officers attached to traffic duties to ensure that our roads are safer and reforms in this area are evident and visible to the mwananchi. During this festive season, I want to see enhanced traffic law enforcement, public education and professional conduct from our officers. I have established adequate monitoring mechanisms and those officers who fail to comply with this directive will

only have themselves to blame. All the laws and regulation including those regulating motorcycles must be enforced firmly and with integrity.

Finally, as we celebrate Christmas and the New Year, the police family cannot forget the brave men and women who lost their lives in the service of others.

Our thoughts and prayers are with their families. In the coming year we hope that , the government will operationalize a suitable police officers life insurance scheme as part of the most urgent police reforms to mitigate the effects of such inevitable calamities. Let the memories of these gallant officers strengthen our resolve to end violent crime in this country. Let their example inspire us to redouble our efforts to ensure that the communities we serve are safe and well protected.

May God rest their souls in eternal peace.

Merry Christmas and a happy prosperous new year to you all.

(MATHEW K. ITEERE) MGH., CBS.

COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

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