

The Honorable
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KENYA

Jürgen Büchy
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Situation of the Samburu People in Laikipia-District

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JB/AS

Dear Mr. President

We have heard with great concern of the current situation of the Samburu People in the Laikipia-District of Kenya. According to our knowledge the Samburu have been evicted from Eland Downs in the past years in order to enable the foundation of a National Park in this region. We are told that the living situation of the Samburu since then is alarming and that harassments of the community are still going on. We also understand that the eviction has been carried out in order to ensure the preservation of wildlife and to thereby foster the development of tourism in Kenya.

The German Travel Association (DRV) of which I am the president represents the German travel industry, namely 80 percent of the turnover of German tour operators and travel agents in our country. Kenya is an important destination to our members: Our guests value the beauty of your country, the exotic wildlife and the friendliness of their hosts. Especially the National Parks of Kenya represent a strong asset of your country as a tourism destination. However, our members also share the opinion that tourism development needs to be carried out in a sustainable manner. This comprises not only the preservation of the ecological balance in the destinations but also social sustainability, which shows for example in the respect of local communities and their cultures and traditions.

Tourism development on the expense of human rights and local communities cannot be the right solution and does not find the support of the German travel industry.

We understand and value the objective of the Kenyan Government to make sure that the precious wildlife in Kenya is protected. At the same time there are good examples from other regions of your country that such preservation can be achieved in cooperation with the local communities instead of by their exclusion. For example, the Il Ngwesi Group Ranch in Kenya received a lot of attention by the German media – not only because of its royal British guests but also because it is managed by the Massai people themselves while at the same time ensuring an ecologically sustainable development of the area. Such good examples create positive publicity and help promoting Kenya in the world as attractive destination. The eviction of the Samburu People however has the opposite effect.

Sustainable tourism is a strong and lasting trend and sustainable tourism development helps destinations to gain respect and attention in outgoing markets such as Germany. At the same time, more and more tour operators subject themselves to sustainability guidelines and therefore check carefully which products they include in their offer.

For these reasons I respectfully urge you to convey a solution that allows the Samburu to reinstall in the Eland Downs and to give them a part in the preservation of the wildlife in Laikipia. This will benefit Kenya's image in the world as well as its tourism development.

I remain at your disposal if you should have any further questions or would like to discuss this matter in more detail.

With kind regards



Jürgen Büchy
President