



AFRICA

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Kenya defends tribal census figures

The head of Kenya's census has defended the release of national census figures that include tribal affiliations.

The decision has been criticised by some as stoking ethnic divisions.

In early 2008, more than 1,000 Kenyans were killed and 300,000 made homeless in post-election ethnic violence.

But the census director general said it was better to have indisputable numbers on Kenya's ethnic make-up, rather than politically motivated claims from the groups themselves.

The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics' [census figures](#) show that the East African nation's population has increased by more than a third in the past 10 years to 39 million.

'Nothing political'

The BBC's Peter Greste in the capital, Nairobi, says no single political issue is as divisive in Kenya as ethnicity.

Over the decades politicians have stoked tribal conflict as a way of winning support in elections.

It underpinned corruption and nepotism, often with catastrophic consequences, our

correspondent says.

At the launch of the census report, Planning Minister Wycliffe Oparanya admitted there had been controversy over what figures to release.

"There was a lot of debate on whether to include ethnicity in the census, but we have decided to be transparent," Kenya's East African Standard newspaper quotes him as saying.

The Kikuyu, Luhya, Kalenjin, Luo and Kamba were listed as the most populous ethnic groups.

Census Director General Anthony Kilele said there was nothing political in the statistics themselves, but rather in the way people used them.

The chairman of the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), set up to ease ethnic tensions after the post-election violence in 2007 and 2008, said there was a danger some groups would use the results to obtain more resources.

"That's one of the things that the National Cohesion and Integration Commission is supposed to keep an eye on," Mzalendo Kibunja told the BBC's Focus on Africa programme.

"You say because you are a dominant tribe then you are also dominant in terms of resource allocation. That is what is wrong," he said.

Other census figures showed that more than 67% of Kenyans live in rural areas, 63% of households have a mobile phone and 30% of the population has access to piped water.

Mr Oparanya added the high population growth would have an adverse affect on spending, so an aggressive family planning programme would now be launched.

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