



Thursday, 13th November 2008

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Poll

Do you think Barack Obama's election as US President will change Kenya's fortunes?

- Yes
 No

Kogelo joy after Obama wins big

Published on 05/11/2008

By Maina Muiruri and Kepher Otieno

Darkness did not fall on Kogelo village, Siaya District, as the US went to the polls on Tuesday.

Not even after a glowing orange sunset behind the Nyangoma plains in Nyanza Province.

More than 50 floodlights set up by local and foreign media teams lit up the tiny village, which was one of the focal points of the American election.

In the tiny village off a dusty path from the main Kisumu-Siaya road, activity throbbed all night alongside the elections that would install its 'own son' into the White House.



Kenyans celebrate Senator Barack Obama's win in the US presidential polls in Kogelo, Siaya District, on Wednesday.

Several generators installed by hordes of journalists buzzed all night as a giant TV screen kept Kogelo abreast of the unfolding events in the historic polls.

A large crowd of villagers and visitors camped overnight in the compound of a local dispensary, braving torrential rain to celebrate the proudest moment for the village.

Once in a while, live pictures from Kogelo would be flashed on the big screen and the villagers would yell in disbelief as the world watched them.

Shouts of 'Ja Kogelo Wa!' (Man from Kogelo) and 'Obama Biro, yawne yoo' (Obama is coming clear the way), rent the air.

Celebrity

Mama Sarah Anyango, Obama's grandmother, revelled in celebrity status.

She was driven in a four-wheel drive SUV escorted by two police cars to Kogelo Dispensary grounds where the vigil was, amid cheers from the crowd.

After Obama was declared winner by CNN at dawn, the grandmother emerged from her gate accompanied by women relatives, doing a jig and letting out a traditional ululation, known locally as sigalagala, for her grandson's victory.

Obama's half sister Auma Aoko Obama spoke at a Press briefing while interpreting for the grandmother.

She said they were waiting for Obama to call her to deliver the news personally.

The Obama factors have been rolled out in the village by the Government.

The ten-kilometre stretch from the tarmacked junction to Kogelo has been upgraded with murrum in the past one week.

Kenya Power and Lighting Company field people were on location yesterday pulling a power line from the main road to Mama Sarah's home.

A police post with three tents has been stationed at the Obama homestead, while a second one has been put up near Kogelo

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Your Say

Kenya's fortunes should never be expected to come from Obama. Kenya's leadership will by embracing policies of good governance, making an effort to revitalize the economy and creating jobs for its citizenry. what is seen from kibaki is greed, desire to lead without regard of whether he won or not. ...

M. B. Robert, Kenya

Your Comments

market.

Siaya OCPD Johnstone Ipara said security would be maintained even after the election.

With hope fulfilled, at dawn in Kogelo, as the sun rose from the hills far in Ugwe (East) the first streaks of light were met with more celebrations than what ushered it the previous night.

Ecstatic villagers

Obama had won and the villagers were elated, expressing all manner of expectations for the village Obama visited last in 2006.

A resident, Ochieng' Oduol was among those who braved the freezing cold said Obama's win would bring good tidings to the sleepy village.

"We are very happy for his success, our village will never be the same again as he will not forget us," he said.

Others shared in the moment and hoped it would have an impact on their village.

Dr Michael Rajula, one of Obama's uncles, and a consultant anaesthetist at the University of Nairobi described Obama's victory as "God sent".

Another uncle, Malik Obama, offered a bull to be slaughtered and said: "Kogelo will never be the same again."

About 40 bishops held prayers and kept vigil at the village, praying for Obama's victory.

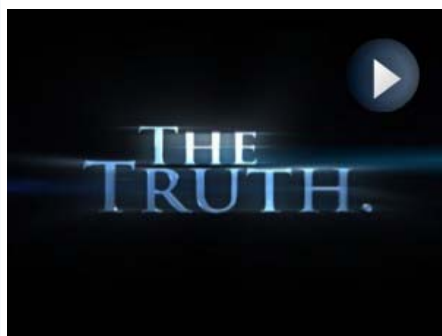
Mama Sarah said, "I could fall down with excitement at the airport when I will be invited to see him being sworn-in, this dream has come true."

And even if nothing major happens to Kogelo village from this victory, it will pride in the fact it has produced a world-famous son named Obama.




Obama's grandmother Mama Sarah Anyango Obama celebrates her grandson's victory in Kogelo. [PHOTO: BONIFACE OKENDO/STANDARD AND REUTERS]

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