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KENYAN POLICE IGNORE ATTACK ON PIONEERING WOMEN'S VILLAGE

August 19, 2009, Umoja Uaso, Kenya: A gunman has attacked a leading Kenyan women's initiative in Northern Kenya, threatening its members and chasing residents out of their homes.



The [Umoja Uaso women's village](#) is a refuge for Samburu women who were abused or abandoned by their husbands. The village (shown below) is a partner of the Washington-based organization Vital Voices, and of The Advocacy Project (AP).

The local police have so far taken no action, causing anger and concern among women's advocates in Kenya and Washington, DC.

The gunman, Fabiano David Lolosoli, is the former husband of Rebecca Lolosoli, who founded the village in 1990. Mr Lolosoli allegedly came to the village looking for Ms Lolosoli, who was not home at the time, and said he was going to kill her.

"He told the women to 'leave before he shot them,'" said one eyewitness, contacted by AP.

According to local sources, Ms Lolosoli has filed complaints with the local police chief (Officer Commanding Police Station) in Archer's Post, Kenya, and also with the area police chief (Officer Commanding Police Division) in the town of Maralal. She was told that the attack is considered a domestic issue and the police would not intervene.

According to sources, the 48 women who live at Umoja Uaso have scattered and Mr Lolosoli is still leaving and reentering the village, carrying his gun.

When Ms Lolosoli founded the village, the original deed for the land was in the name of Umoja Uaso. Since then, Mr Lolosoli has succeeded in changing the deed into Ms Lolosoli's name, so that he would stand a better chance at inheriting the land. Mr Lolosoli is a well-connected businessman, and was formerly the chairman of the Archer's Post County Council.



Vital Voices has helped the village with training and support from Washington. Earlier this summer, at the request of Vital Voices, AP recruited a Peace Fellow, [Kate Cummings](#), to help the village catalog their beaded jewelry (shown at right). Ms Lolosoli displayed the jewelry at the [Santa Fe International Folk Art Market](#) in July, and presented handicrafts at the Kenyan Embassy

in Washington.

The village women support themselves through the sale of their jewelry, as well as collectively-owned livestock. With training from Vital Voices, the women of Umoja Uaso are also challenging the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) and educating their daughters - a rarity in the Samburu culture.

AP strongly condemns the threats of violence at Umoja Uaso, and urges the police to take action and protect the women living there.

- Learn more about [Umoja Uaso](#)
- Read the blog of [Peace Fellow Kate Cummings](#)