

US lowers

Kenya's terror threat level

By CYRUS OMBATI

The US has downgraded the security threat in Kenya, opening the door for Americans to invest in the country. The terror alert to US citizens has been reduced from severe to high, which is considered safe for investors, informed sources said.

Under the US National Terrorism Advisory System, alerts are issued under the categories of severe, high, elevated, guarded and low.

These threat levels are intended to reflect the probability of a terror attack and its potential gravity.

The review has seen a number of companies including Burger King and Ford set up bases in the country. A number of celebrities including Chris Brown have also visited Kenya in the recent past.

"More celebrities are on the way," said an official at the US Embassy in Nairobi.

On the other hand, Burger King's entry into the local market comes at a time when there is an influx of fast food brands including South African seafood chain Ocean Basket, sandwich chain Subway, ice cream seller Cold Stone Creamery, Japanese firm Toridoll and Domino's Pizza.

US Embassy spokesperson Fiona Evans, however, downplayed the linkage between the upgrading of the level of alertness and coming of the investors.

She said the US business community's interest in the growing Kenyan market is influenced by more than the legally-mandated US government advisories for American citizens.

"US companies and investors pay more attention to remove such as the

Cohesion

Agency wants initiatives to learn national values

By ERIC LUNGAI

The cohesion agency wants initiatives undergoing communal rites of passages to be taught national values.

Commissioner Belinda Ochiel from the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) said the initiative would encourage co-existence among diverse groups.

She said most communities had high regard for their rites of passage and enriching such ceremonies would be highly effective.

"Using culture to promote national integration is a sure way of making sure that all are reached accordingly," Ms Ochiel said at the weekend during the 16th edition of the Cultural Festival at Kaimosi Teachers Training College.

She added: "Most youths after they have been initiated, become either responsible or irresponsible citizens depending on what they

are taught while undergoing the process."

Ochiel said plans were under way to reach out to groups such as the Tiriki and Bukusu through their month-long traditional circumcision ceremonies.

She warned youths against being hired by politicians to help them deal with their competitors during electioneering.

"While holding politicians responsible for any polarisation messages spread across various communities, the youths used will equally be held responsible," she said.

She noted the commission had set out to reach as many youths as possible through events such as performance arts and village theatres to teach national values.

Students from different communities at the college showcased their rich cultural heritage. The event was also attended by National

Police Service Commission Chairperson Johnstone Kavuludi, Hamisi MP Charles Gimose and County Director of Education Siloma Kinayia.

Kavuludi urged students to be ambassadors for change while outside the institution, noting that the country cannot rely on politicians. Mr Kinayia pointed out that such cultural performances help to bridge the inter-communal gap.

"The 42 tribes in the country should not be our greatest enemy but rather help us to propel our interests together," he said.

College principal Onzere Mudangate said this year's cultural festival had been tailored towards next year's General Election, noting that teaching national values to students and the neighbouring community would help them tolerate each other.

Police attack scribes during demo

