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- ▶ English News
- ▶ Kiswahili news
- ▶ Sports
- ▶ Uchaguzi 2005
- ▶ Thisday
- ▶ Newspapers
- ▶ Television
- ▶ Radio
- ▶ Features
- ▶ Editorials
- ▶ Columnist
- ▶ Regional Roundup
- ▶ Your Comments
- ▶ Feedback
- ▶ IPP Group

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Z` bar needs coalition govt - US envoy


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By Lydia Shekighenda

The American Ambassador to Tanzania, Michael Retzer, has described the formation of a coalition government as the best way to ensure a permanent end to the political impasse in Zanzibar.

He has also explained that it was of fundamental importance for all segments of the population to be equitably represented in the affairs of the government, warning that anyone or anything causing divisions among a country's people puts national unity at great risk.

Ambassador Retzer said whenever there was division among the electorate national unity was very important since everyone wanted to be represented in the government.

The envoy made the remarks when fielding questions from journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday at the launch by the US Embassy of an 'Education Perspective Chapter' meant to serve underprivileged sectors of the society in Tanzania.

 He said negotiations on the Zanzibar issue by the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi and the opposition Civic United Front, due to climax next week, were taking exceptionally long to conclude "because everyone wants to be represented in the government".

"Under such a situation, it is important to bring all parties into the government so that everyone is represented," he observed.

Ambassador Retzer noted that Tanzania has historically been an exemplary island of peace in an often unstable neighbourhood, adding however that the country has not been completely free from violence and could not consider itself immune to violence.

"Two days ago we commemorated the ninth anniversary of the August 7 East Africa Embassy bombings and today we still face the potential for violence if the Zanzibar question doesn't get resolved," he pointed out.

"Today we still face the potential for violence if the Zanzibar question does not get resolved," he explained, expressing hope that CCM and CUF leaders would come up with a mutually agreeable accord before their August 15 deadline to forestall the eventuality.

EPC involves a group of volunteer students from the US expected to assist in implementing highly interactive health knowledge and related programmes, including those on HIV/AIDS, first aid, home safety, personal hygiene, and English language to students in chosen schools.

According to Retzer, the volunteers will share their knowledge and experience with youth in both mainland Tanzania and the Isles.

Yesterday's EPC launch was confined to the University of Dar es Salaam and Karagwe Secondary School and 14 team members have already left for Karagwe in Kagera Region to work in volunteer services projects.

Other volunteers are set to go to Pemba to inaugurate EPC chapters at Utaani Secondary School and Benjamin Mkapa Teachers' College.

▶ SOURCE: *GUARDIAN*

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