

**Monday, June 5, 2017**  
For Immediate Release

**Contact**  
Laikipia Farmers' Association  
Elodie Sampere, +254 / 727341612 or  
[elodiesampere@yahoo.com](mailto:elodiesampere@yahoo.com)

## **Further Job Losses in Laikipia**

*The Laikipia Farmers' Association Regrets that the Continuing Land Invasions,  
Violence and Arson Forces the Closure of Sosian Lodge*

**Nanyuki, (Laikipia Farmers' Association)** - Since the beginning of the year Sosian, amongst other properties in West Laikipia, has been battling mass land invasions, violence and vandalism. Whilst all tourism was re-directed elsewhere, there had been hope that the insurrection would, at this stage, have been contained. It has not. On Friday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017, the Directors of Sosian Ranch made the very difficult decision to shut the lodge for the foreseeable future. The Laikipia Farmers' Association (LFA) understands that Sosian was forced to make 21 members of their staff redundant.

Sosian Ranch was bought in 2002 with the aim of creating a functioning cattle ranch, alongside a viable conservancy for tourism. When the ranch was acquired, it had been completely overrun to the extent that neither cattle nor wildlife could be sustained on the land. The shareholders have since re-invested all profits into the cattle and tourism business, creating some 150 permanent jobs. Sosian's reputation as a tourism destination in Laikipia was highly rated bringing over 1,870 bed nights in 2016. The mothballing of the tourism lodge will undoubtedly hurt Laikipia from both a reputational and economic perspective.

"Sosian Ranch was running as a successful Laikipian commercial business, paying taxes and creating employment," said Richard Constant, one of the Directors of Sosian Ranch. "The destruction of three valuable properties and the murder of Tristan Voorspuy can be laid squarely at the door of those political leaders who incited the Pokot and Samburu invasion. As a business, we call for the disarmament of the illegal weapons possessed by those who still unlawfully sit on our property and the arrest of their ring leaders. Many of our neighbours to whom we provided grazing in past droughts have suffered just as much at the hands of these terrorists."

With over 100,000 head of illegal cattle having passed through the ranch over the last five months, the grazing is now almost non-existent. Despite the fact that there has been rain up north and grazing being available in their traditional pastures, herds have begun to return in large numbers to Sosian, Ol Maisor and Suyian. The LFA has continuously called upon the government to restore law and order but attempts by government forces to rebuff the invaders on a large scale have been unsuccessful thus far.

On Sosian alone, the invaders have killed 13 elephants for their ivory. Numerous other species, including the endangered Grevy's zebra, impala, hartebeest and buffaloes have been found riddled with bullets and their meat crudely butchered.

Reports from the LFA's membership show that wildlife patterns have been severely disrupted, risking severe serious damage to one of Laikipia's most important industries, tourism. The county's conservancies that support rhino are operating under intense pressure with the proximity of so many armed opportunists.

The Directors of Sosian will revisit the re-opening of the lodge when and if it is safe to do so. However, they believe it will take several years to rebuild what was a productive, successful business.

"The LFA continues to urge the government to take effective action to restore law and order in Laikipia. The LFA acknowledges that the government has deployed the military in support of the police and hopes that their efforts will result in a more secure future for more Laikipians," said Martin Evans, the Chairman of the LFA.

**ENDS**

For more details, including interviews with the LFA chair or specific members, please email [elodiesampere@yahoo.com](mailto:elodiesampere@yahoo.com)

The Laikipia Farmers' Association is authorised to talk on behalf of all of its members and can quickly find information for reporters directly from the parties concerned. We encourage journalists to approach us with any requests for information they may have, rather than trying to contact our members individually.