



# TJRC promises justice for Garissa survivors

Photo/ STEPHEN ASTARIKO

BY STEPHEN ASTARIKO

REJUVENATED TJRC yesterday appealed to human rights abuse survivors in North Eastern to pour their hearts out.

Commissioner Margaret Shava, keen to open a new page after months of squabbles, told her audience in Garissa the commission had dealt with its troubled past.

She said, "We are now operating under a new constitution which will help us unearth the many atrocities committed to the people from this region and other parts of the country. We urge civic organisations and leaders countrywide to cooperate with us so that Kenyans can get the much needed justice that that they have all along yearned for."

The commission has for the past year been dogged by wrangles over the suitability of former chairman Bethwel Kiplagat. Kiplagat stepped aside from the post a few weeks ago after his position

became untenable. Shava told her audience the TJRC will not let them down and they should recount their ordeals at the hearings to be held in public halls countrywide.

She made the remarks at a consultative meeting with community leaders, NGOs and politicians.

Garissa mayor Mohamed Gabow said North Eastern had a lot of complaints because many people had been maimed and killed by the police and army in the past 47 years.

"We are one region which bore the brunt of sufferings from previous regimes. Many of our people are still traumatised by what they saw or went through during those dark days," Gabow said.

He told the TJRC to hold sessions in villages instead of reaching out to people in large urban centres to reach a majority who bore the brunt of human rights abuse.

"The commission needs to go down to villages and have a wide and aggressive network where the



**READY TO LISTEN:** TJRC Commissioner Margaret Shava with Garissa mayor Mohamed Gabow (R) and his deputy Ismail Garbath.

voices of the rural folk will also be given a platform to be heard. In so doing we will be moving forward."

Gabow said he was happy the

leadership rows, triggered by civil rights groups demanding Kiplagat quit because they were convinced he was not suitable for the job, were over.