



## Reopening of Kerio View Takeoff Speech

**28/02/2026**

Dear JP and the wonderful team at Kerio View Hotel,

My name is Veit Kessen, Communication Officer and Treasurer of the Paragliding Association of Kenya — the PAK. I have been paragliding in Kenya for 14 years now, and over those years, JP and his team have become truly dear friends of mine. I have had the joy of visiting this hotel and this magnificent valley almost every year, and it always feels like coming home.

On behalf of the Paragliding Association of Kenya, it is my great honour and heartfelt pleasure to congratulate you on the reopening of the Kerio View Hotel Paragliding Takeoff this weekend!

For those who may not know us, the PAK was founded in 2018 by a group of long-standing pilots here in Kenya. Before the PAK, paragliding in Kenya was largely unregulated — and while that certainly appeals to the free spirit in all of us pilots, the Kenya Civil Aviation Authorities called for a more structured approach to enhance safety, improve take-off and landing sites across the country, and to truly grow the sport we all love.

Today the PAK boasts with around 20 local pilots and over 80-100 annually visiting paragliding pilot members.

And this place — this very takeoff — holds a very special place in the heart of that story.

I was here myself back in 2012, and I still remember the sight vividly: 50 to 60 pilots laying out their wings each morning at sunrise, right here on this very ground. They came from all over the world — guided paragliding tourist groups, solo adventurers chasing personal bests, and some even chasing world records over the breathtaking skies of the Kerio Valley. It was truly something to behold.

This takeoff was the beating heart of paragliding in the region. Pilots filled the Kerio View Hotel, spilled into neighbouring hotels, dined at local restaurants, and brought with them a vibrant energy that lifted the entire local economy.

Every year, from December to March, Iten was not only alive with the world's greatest long-distance runners — it was also buzzing with the colour and excitement of an international paragliding community. It was a high season like no other.

And then, sadly, it came to a sudden stop. The closure of the takeoff due to a land dispute cast a long shadow, and the numbers of visiting paragliders dropped dramatically.

But today — today is a new beginning.

We at the PAK firmly believe that this reopening is the spark that will reignite the flame. We believe pilots will return — from Kenya, from across Africa, and from around the world — to once again soar above this spectacular valley and experience the magic of Elgeyo Marakwet County.



For those less familiar with our sport: paragliding, or free flying, is what we call a foot-launching sport. We take off and land simply with our feet — much like a bird. It is one of the most pure and beautiful forms of human flight.

And like any sport, it comes with its risks.

That is precisely why the PAK exists — to make paragliding in Kenya as safe as possible. We are fully committed to supporting every pilot who visits Kenya.

Together with the Kenya Civil Aviation Authorities, we have put in place a simple but important mandatory policy for all visiting paragliding pilots:

- 1. Register online with the PAK for a temporary 30-day membership (USD25)**
- 2. Obtain 30-day insurance cover through Rescue.co (USD25)**

During the online PAK membership registration, pilots provide their key details — including their estimated time of arrival, ETA number, and importantly, the name and colour of their glider. In return, the PAK sends each pilot vital safety information: the do's and don'ts when flying from any takeoff in Kenya, airspace limitations, and specific terrain features to be aware of along the ridge.

Should an incident ever occur, these details allow local authorities to quickly identify a pilot by the colour of their glider, and help avert the need for a lengthy formal investigation.

As for Rescue.co Insurance Cover — they are the most trusted search and rescue company in Kenya. In an emergency, they can deploy ambulances, fixed-wing aircraft, and helicopters to reach a pilot and transport them to a hospital of their own choosing. It is the fastest, safest, and most reliable emergency response available in this country.

JP, your hotel has always been more than just a place to stay. It has been a home base, a gathering point, and a symbol of hospitality for pilots from every corner of the globe. With this reopening, we are confident that those days of sunrise launches and full dining rooms are not just a memory — they are our future.

On behalf of every pilot in the PAK, and every pilot yet to discover the wonder of flying here — thank you. Thank you for bringing this takeoff back to life.

For further information, about PAK, please visit our webpage:

[www.paraglidingassociationkenya.com](http://www.paraglidingassociationkenya.com)

Let's Go Fly!

Best wishes from the PAK team!



Veit Kessen,

Communications Officer

**Paragliding Association of Kenya**



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**Kerio View Hotel Takeoff:**

**2016**



**2026**



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