

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Kenya: Amnesty International calls on the Kenyan government, election candidates and political parties to respect and protect human rights

Amnesty International calls on Kenyan authorities, all election candidates and political parties to take steps to prevent election-related violence with the aim of ensuring effective respect and protection for human rights in the lead up to and during the general elections scheduled for 27 December. The organization calls on the Kenyan authorities to ensure that human rights abuses in the context of election-related violence are investigated and perpetrators brought to justice.

The last three multi-party elections in 1992, 1997 and 2002 were marred by politically motivated violence and human rights abuses by politically and/or ethnically aligned militia, as well as human rights violations, including excessive use of force, by law enforcement officials. Amnesty International is concerned at reports that human rights abuses have already occurred in the run-up to the December elections. Examples include:-

- Reports indicate that since October 2007, at least 25 people have been killed, hundreds of homes burnt and over 16,000 people displaced in Kuresoi area of Molo district in the Rift Valley province as a result of attacks by unknown armed gangs thought to have links with politicians. The area witnessed similar violence in the run-up to the 1992 and 1997 general elections. Although police have stated that investigations, including of several politicians allegedly implicated in the violence, are underway, there have not to date been any indications that the investigations are leading to prosecutions of those suspected of being responsible.
- Throughout the year, hundreds of people have been killed as a result of gunshot wounds, cuts and burns sustained in attacks and more than 100,000 people have been displaced in Mt. Elgon district near the Kenya-Uganda border as a result of inter-clan clashes. The clashes, while primarily over land distribution, have involved attacks by armed groups, mainly a group calling itself the Sabaot Land Defence Force, thought to have links with politicians. The clashes have continued in the lead up to the elections despite the deployment of additional security officers and a recent declaration by the government of a curfew in the area.
- Since October 2007, a number of individuals have reportedly been killed and seriously injured as a direct result of political violence in campaign rallies and in shootings by police in some of the rallies in different parts of the country. Reports indicate that Wilson Shivera, 20 and Reuben Shikoli 32, were killed as a result of gunshot wounds when police bodyguards attached to politicians allegedly fired live bullets in response to crowd violence in two different political rallies in Western Kenya in the months of October and December. While police have stated that investigations

were ongoing in both cases, there have been no reports of prosecution of the alleged perpetrators.

- On 7 September 2007, Flora Igoki Tera, a parliamentary aspirant in Meru district, Central Kenya, was attacked by a gang of three armed men. Ms Tera was beaten up by the armed men, forced to swallow human faeces as they pulled her hair and warned her to keep out of politics. There have been no reports of prosecution of the alleged perpetrators.

Amnesty International calls on the government to immediately institute independent, impartial and thorough investigations into all allegations of human rights abuses in the context of election violence in the run up to the elections scheduled for 27 December, as well as during and after the elections. Where human rights abuses have taken place, those found responsible, including politicians and law enforcement officials, must be held accountable.

Amnesty International appeals to all the election candidates and political party leaders to immediately call on their supporters to respect human rights, so that everyone in Kenya is able to participate freely and without fear in the forthcoming elections. The organization recommends to all presidential candidates and political party leaders to:-

- Undertake to respect and uphold human rights and respect Kenya's Electoral Code of Conduct.
- Publicly state that acts of political violence by party members and candidates will not be tolerated, and that disciplinary measures will be taken against any party member or candidate who commits human rights abuses.
- Prohibit the hiring of vigilante groups or armed gangs to intimidate political opponents and supporters and/or to cause political violence leading to human rights abuses.
- Call for effective investigations by the relevant authorities into cases of human rights abuses in the context of election-related political violence. Where human rights abuses take place, urge the authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice without undue delay.
- Cooperate fully with the authorities' investigations into human rights abuses in the context of election-related violence.