

Kenya: UN genocide adviser urges end to violence in Kenya, sends staffer there

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The United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide today called for an immediate halt to the destructive cycle of attacks and revenge attacks in Kenya, where post-electoral violence continues to claim lives, and announced plans to dispatch a staff member there.

Francis Deng urged national and local leaders on all sides to publicly call for an end to the violence and to statements inciting violence, UN spokesperson Marie Okabe told reporters in New York.

Mr. Deng is dispatching one of his staff members to Kenya as soon as possible to examine the situation, Ms. Okabe added.

Nearly 700 people are believed to have been killed in the violence, which first began a few weeks ago after Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner over opposition leader Raila Odinga in December elections. The crisis has also forced some 255,000 to flee their homes.

Noting that political and community leaders may be held accountable for violations of international law committed at their instigation, Mr. Deng urged them to meet their **responsibility to protect** the civilian population and prevent the violence.

The Special Adviser echoed High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour in calling on the Kenyan Government to abide by its international human rights obligations in responding to demonstrations, including holding police accountable for their actions.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=25425&Cr=kenya&Cr1>