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UN human rights chief urges swift action to quell violence in Kyrgyzstan

OHCHR Media Centre

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The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, expressed alarm Monday at the escalating violence in southern Kyrgyzstan, and urged the local and national authorities “to take swift and decisive action to protect citizens, irrespective of their ethnic origin, and curb the violence.”

Pillay said she was **shocked by the scale of the inter-ethnic violence** which is reported to have led to more than a hundred people being killed, and well over a thousand injured, since fighting erupted in the city of Osh on 10 June, spreading to the neighbouring town of Jalalabad over the weekend.

“It seems **indiscriminate killings, including of children, and rapes have been taking place on the basis of ethnicity**,” Pillay said. “This is a very dangerous situation, given the ethnic patchwork in this part of Kyrgyzstan, as well as in neighbouring areas of Uzbekistan,” she warned. “It has been known for many years that this region is a potential tinder-box, and for that reason it is essential that the authorities act firmly to halt the fighting – which appears to be orchestrated, targeted and well planned – before it spreads further inside Kyrgyzstan or even

across the border into neighbouring countries.”

(...) “They must intervene to protect people at risk, especially vulnerable groups including particular minorities, women and children,” Pillay said. “They also need to do their utmost to stop the destruction of property, which may greatly complicate the effort to find a peaceful solution.”

The High Commissioner also expressed concern about huge numbers of people, mostly Uzbeks, who have been forced to flee their homes, and urged both Uzbekistan – which is already reported to have received tens of thousands of people fleeing the fighting – and Tajikistan to keep their borders open to anyone, irrespective of age or gender, who is in need of sanctuary. (...)

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