



Kenya National Commission on Human Rights

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PRESS RELEASE: NAROK COUNTY DEMONSTRATIONS

Following the reported skirmishes in Narok County yesterday, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights is concerned about the death(s) and injuries sustained by both civilians and police officers. We condole with the familie(s) of those that lost their lives in the demonstration.

Our preliminary investigations reveal that the injuries vary from bullet wounds to the use of blunt objects. While media and other reports indicate that the injuries and fatalities sustained were inflicted by the excess use of force by members of the National Police Service, the National Commission has gathered that Kenya Wildlife Rangers could have had a hand in the same. Some of the injured are hospitalized in Kijabe Mission Hospital and Kenyatta National Hospital, while others were treated and discharged.

The Narok county residents together with their elected representatives issued a notice to the Narok County Commissioner to hold lawful, peaceful demonstrations on January 26th 2015 and present a petition of their grievances to the Governor. Kenyans have a Constitutional right to demonstrate and therefore

the deaths and injuries resulting from the exercise of guaranteed rights as per Article 37 are unacceptable.

The National Commission on Human Rights is concerned about the threats to human rights defenders from Narok County. These human rights defenders should not be harassed and/ or intimidated. Should they be required by the National Police Service, then the laid down procedures of the law should be adhered to.

The National Commission on Human Rights is also concerned with the orders issued by the Cabinet Secretary - Interior to have the demonstration cancelled. We query the premise of his actions noting that the power to permit or cancel demonstrations, protests, pickets still lies with the National Police Service as provided under the Public Order Act. This cannot be limited arbitrarily.

In conclusion;

- We urge the people of Narok to remain calm and exercise restraint from further agitation as investigations continue on the Monday incident.
- We urge the people and political leadership of Narok County and other counties to utilize other available avenues such as the judiciary and relevant independent institutions and commissions to have their grievances addressed.
- The National Commission on Human Rights will work closely with its partners such as N.C.I.C, to ensure cohesion amongst residents and leaders of Narok County. We shall also work with I.P.O.A to ensure accountability by officers who might be found culpable.

- We remind the public that police presence in lawful peaceful demonstrations is allowed by the law and maximum restraint should be exercised at all times to avert confrontations. Police presence is there to protect lives, property and other constitutionally guaranteed rights of both protestors and non-protestors.

The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights will remain vigilant on promoting and protecting human rights, their compliance in Narok County and in other counties.

KAGWIRIA MBOGORI
CHAIRPERSON