

UN rights chief urges Kenyan leaders to act responsibly, avoid further violence

15 August 2017 – Calling on the Kenyan authorities to avoid violence, the United Nations human rights chief today urged the Government to make an immediate announcement that it will cooperate and ensure accountability for reported abuse by security forces which has led to deaths and injuries, including among children.

“Kenya is at a critical juncture,” said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein. “The country’s political leaders must do their utmost [to calm a volatile political climate](#). If there are claims to make about the conduct of the elections, they should be made through constitutional and legal means.”

He noted that people have the right to assemble and protest peacefully, and the authorities have a responsibility to ensure they can do so.

“The Government also has a responsibility to ensure that security forces prioritize dialogue, non-violent means and exercise restraint, using proportionate force only when unavoidable,” the UN High Commissioner said.

He decried the use of violence by protesters, but also stressed that political leaders should send clear messages to their supporters urging peaceful conduct.

“All acts of violence, including the serious allegations of excessive use of force by security forces, must be promptly and independently investigated,” he added.

As part of that effort, the High Commissioner called on the Government to make an immediate announcement that it will cooperate fully and unequivocally with the Independent Policing Oversight Authority and with subsequent efforts to ensure accountability.

There are media reports that Kenyan security forces used live ammunition against protesters, and stories of alleged police brutality, leading to several deaths and injuries, including children.

Protests erupted after the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) announced on 11 August that Uhuru Kenyatta was the President-elect.

UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres this weekend stressed the importance of dialogue to diffuse the conflict.

He said the UN, in close collaboration with the African Union and other multilateral and bilateral partners, is fully engaged with Kenya’s political

leadership and relevant stakeholders to facilitate the successful conclusion of the electoral process.